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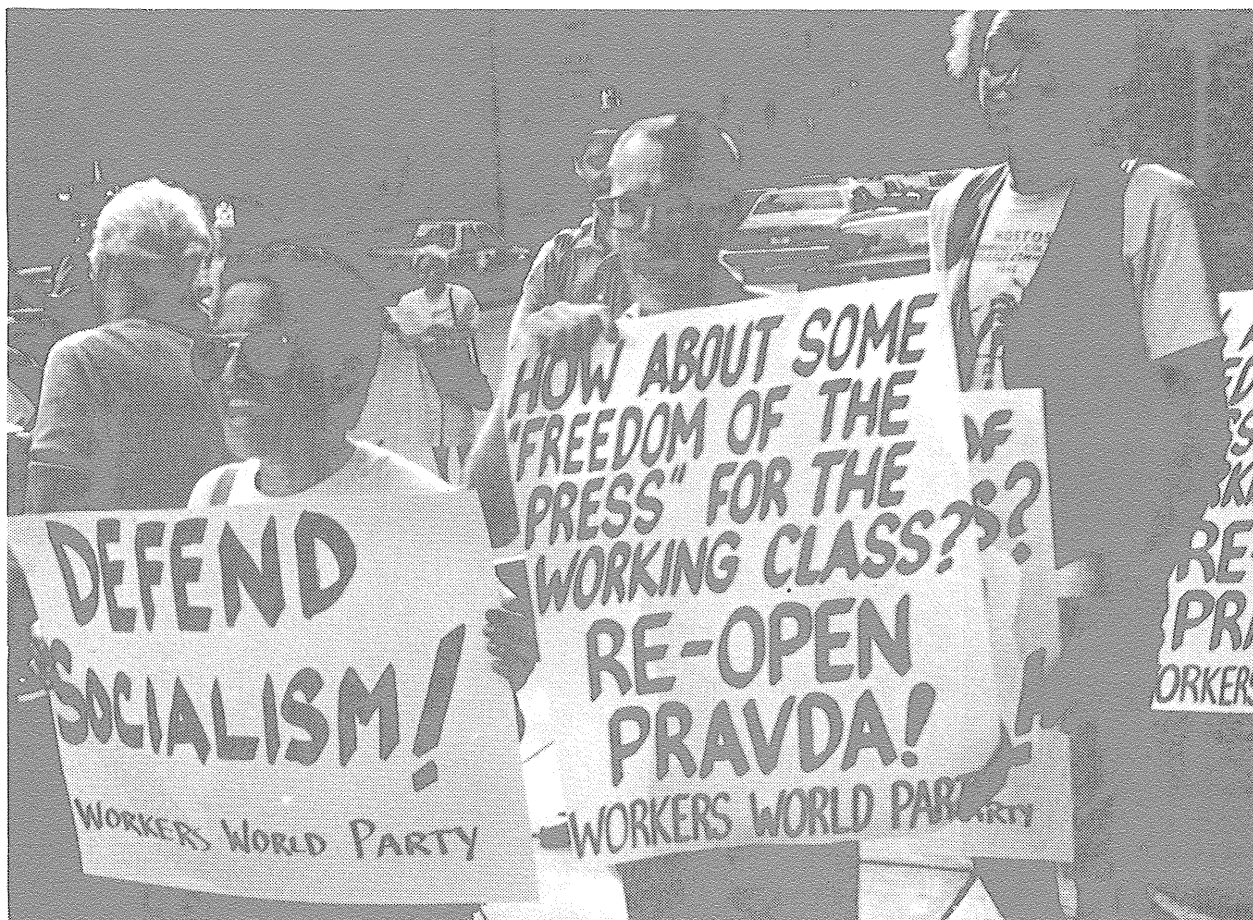
# In Defense of Socialism

Say no to the Bush-Yeltsin-Gorbachev counterrevolution in the USSR

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*Workers World Party demonstration at the Soviet Consulate in NYC on Aug. 27, protesting the Gorbachev-Yeltsin suppression of the Soviet Communist Party, and their counterrevolutionary plans to destroy socialism in the USSR. The demonstration condemned U.S. imperialist intervention and support for these attempts to destroy all the gains made by workers in the USSR.*

Photo: Greg Dunkel

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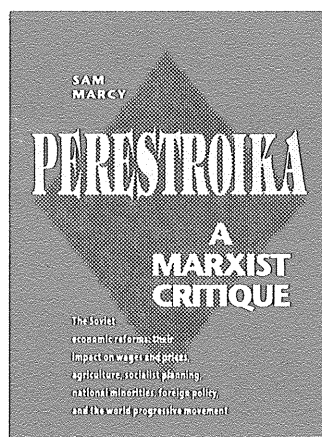
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# Gorbachev, Yeltsin Back In With Imperialist Help Yeltsin's Call for General Strike Fizzles

By Sam Marcy

A coalition of military officers, party officials and security forces has made an ill-fated attempt to halt the process of capitalist restoration in the USSR.

In their news conference and statements the emergency committee tried to assure the imperialist bourgeoisie that they only meant to restore order and proceed with the reforms instituted by Gorbachev. But the world capitalists immediately recognized it as an attempt to overthrow the governing group headed by Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin.

Yeltsin is the president of the Russian Federation and the most outspoken reactionary leader of the bourgeois counterrevolution. He tried to mobilize mass support from the working class in order to shore up the narrow stratum of bourgeois elements in the USSR that is his base of support. Appearing before the world press, he called on the nearly 150 million workers in the USSR to go out on a general strike.

It soon became evident, however, that even though he had available to him not only the world capitalist media but his own radio station, which could reach every nook and corner of the Soviet Union, the strike call fizzled.

## Workers Stay Put

All media accounts agree on this. Except for unspecified numbers of coal miners in Siberia and the Don Bass, the workers did not heed Yeltsin's strike call. Even in Moscow itself, Yeltsin's stronghold, all the factories were operating on Aug. 20 and 21, including the huge Zil auto plant and the Stolichnaya vodka distillery.

Moscow cab driver Nikolai Zavyanov told a reporter from the Washington Post "About three-quarters of the drivers I've talked to at the stations and the airports said the coup is OK, so long as it gets some food on our plates." Even with the troop movements and demonstrations, Moscow has functioned normally from the beginning of the coup attempt until the present time.

Reuter, the British news agency, remarked that the workers at the giant Tyumen oil field also ignored the strike call.

Despite unrelenting TV coverage here, there have been no interviews with striking Soviet workers, not even the coal miners.

Could it be that the workers didn't know about the strike? But the Yeltsin forces had access to their own radio station and were broadcasting unimped-

ed. Moreover, as Western officials have remarked with surprise, the move by the military was not accompanied by any attempt to cut communications in Moscow or elsewhere.

Failing to get any significant response from the working class, the Yeltsin counterrevolutionary forces, and more important the imperialist governments backing them, panicked.

## Massive Imperialist Intervention

The imperialists moved in en masse to shore up the Gorbachev-Yeltsin regime. This proved decisive.

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*"Yeltsin's failure to get the workers' support prompted the world imperialist bourgeoisie to move feverishly, intervening aggressively in defense of Gorbachev and Yeltsin."*

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What followed was characterized by New York Times (Aug. 21) analyst Andrew Rosenthal as an attempt by the Bush administration "to influence Soviet politics more directly than anytime in the more than 70 years since American forces fought with the counterrevolutionary army against the Bolsheviks in the Russian civil war of 1918-19."

Bush, Prime Minister John Major of Britain, former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and President Francois Mitterrand of France made frantic calls directly to Yeltsin to immediately shore up his pro-restorationist forces. At the same time, these capitalist governments shed crocodile tears about their lack of influence in the situation for the benefit of the media.

Yeltsin sent his "foreign minister," Andrei Kozirov, to Brussels to meet with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, who was there for an urgently called meeting of NATO, the military alliance of the U.S. and European imperialists. Kozirev had instructions to form a government in exile in the West if the military coup attempt succeeded.

Yeltsin also asked Thatcher, hated in Britain for her virulently anti-worker and anti-socialist policies, to head up an international committee to investigate

what had happened to Mikhail Gorbachev. The emergency committee said Gorbachev had become ill while on vacation in the Crimea.

## **Bush Promotes Yeltsin To National Leader**

The U.S. virtually broke off diplomatic relations with the Soviet government, instead dealing directly with Yeltsin. Bush quickly sent his newly appointed envoy, multi-millionaire Robert Strauss, to Moscow, but with instructions not to present his credentials to the Soviet authorities. One of Strauss' first acts was to meet with Yeltsin--thus promoting him to head of state in a slap in the face to the many republics outside Russia.

The foreign ministers of the 12 European Community imperialist nations, meeting in The Hague, cut off more than \$1 billion in food credits and technical aid to the USSR. Japan said it would cut off all aid. Manfred Woerner, the Secretary General of NATO, threatened to freeze planned military cut-backs in Europe.

In the U.S., Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, architects of the Gulf war, rushed back to Washington from their vacations for an emergency meeting of the National Security Council.

All the time, the Bush administration and the other leading imperialists kept up a constant flow of contact with Yeltsin, shoring him up.

At first they hoped his appeal would bring about a Solidarity-style general strike of the Polish type. After a day, Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, admitted on ABC-TV's Nightline (Aug. 20) that there was no response to Yeltsin's call. Brzezinski hinted that the imperialist media--especially Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, the BBC and similar stations beamed to the USSR from Germany and France, should step up their propaganda. In another press statement, he also urged that the imperialists give Yeltsin "unambiguous, energetic political and moral support." (New York Times, Aug. 21) It was a clear call for intervention.

Private capital has made such extensive inroads into the Soviet Union in the perestroika years that the media here can now matter-of-factly report that Yeltsin is surrounded by "private security guards" and "private detectives" from agencies with names like Bells and Alex (New York Times, Aug. 21). They are equipped with automatic weapons, bullet-proof vests, camouflage suits, gas masks and Molotov cocktails and are deployed throughout the "White House", Yeltsin's headquarters.

We have maintained all along in these pages for several years now that the forces of the bourgeoisie

in the USSR are a narrow stratum and cannot carry through a full-scale restoration of capitalism on their own. They cannot manage their own affairs on a capitalist basis. So even the imperialist bourgeoisie feared advancing them credits or loans without getting control over the economic and political institutions.

Yeltsin's failure to get the workers' support in the same manner as Lech Walesa was able to in Poland prompted the world imperialist bourgeoisie to move feverishly, intervening most aggressively in defense of Gorbachev and Yeltsin and restoring them to power. Without the imperialist intervention, the Gorbachev-Yeltsin coalition could not have prevailed.

## **Bonaparte, Blanqui, and Marx**

The coalition of different elements from within the state apparatus that made up the emergency committee is what Marxists call a Bonapartist regime, one that straddles the class forces at a time of extreme crisis. The political leadership relied on the military and police to maintain order and stability. Until the coup attempt, they went along with Gorbachev. They were split between the bourgeois and socialist sectors in the USSR, with no definite program on how to get out of the crisis.

Their strategy in attempting a coup d'etat, however, was more reminiscent of Auguste Blanqui than Bonaparte.

Blanqui (1805-1881) was the organizer of a revolutionary secret society who was prominent in every revolutionary upheaval in France until his death. Blanqui relied upon the conspiracy of a small group against the reactionary ruling class, thinking that if they succeeded in carrying out a blow against the state, the masses would follow.

Karl Marx, while calling Blanqui a great revolutionary, criticized his tactics as futile, since they relied on small conspiracies of a select group of people who tried to substitute themselves for the masses. This often paralyzes the mass movement for, when it fails, the attack against the state is turned into an attack against the masses by the state.

As distinguished from Blanquism, Marxism sees that no small group can substitute itself for the masses. Marxism relies on the masses and therefore organizes the workers' party, which is the advance guard of the working class.

Answering critics who said that the Bolsheviks' plans for an insurrection were Blanquist, Lenin wrote in a letter to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party (Oct. 16-17, 1917) just before the party seized power in the October Revolution, "a military conspiracy is Blanquism if it is not orga-



nized by the party of a definite class, if its organizers have not reckoned with the political situation in general and the international situation in particular...."

How interesting that Lenin in his letter warned the party that they had not only to reckon with the political situation at home but the international situation in particular. At the time Lenin was writing, the imperialist bourgeoisie was virtually exhausted from the imperialist war. The situation was favorable for a mass insurrection. Nevertheless, Lenin took great pains to emphasize the particular significance that imperialist intervention would have for the fate of the revolution.

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***"The working class has not yet spoken out, let alone made its move."***

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It was a serious blunder on the part of the emergency coalition to have in any way believed that the imperialist bourgeoisie would not almost instantaneously recognize their action as an attempt to overthrow the Gorbachev-Yeltsin coalition. No amount of reassurance that they would retain the so-called market economy and confine themselves to maintaining social order, fighting crime, etc., could possibly have impressed the bankers and industrialists of Western imperialism, least of all the Pentagon. These vague assurances would only confuse the masses, not the bourgeoisie.

It is easy to level attacks against the emergency committee for the previous record some of them had of support for the Gorbachev program. Whatever mistakes they may have made in organization, timing and so on are of minor significance. Even Blanqui himself, who was a master tactician, made many errors.

What is of decisive significance in this case is not to have realized that a cold takeover of the state apparatus and deposing Gorbachev and Yeltsin would enrage the imperialist bourgeoisie. In the final analysis it would impel the bourgeoisie toward extreme adventurism, unless there was solid mass support for the coup from the beginning. This in turn means that the coup had to be carried out either simultaneously with or immediately following a mass insurrection.

A naked military move, without the awareness of the masses, without organizing and propagandizing for it openly in the way the Bolsheviks did, would leave them open for defeat.

## **Need For Socialist Program**

After declaring their authority and moving troops into Moscow and other areas, the emergency committee did pledge to address some economic issues, for instance promising to set up brigades to bring in the harvest and construct much-needed housing. This would only be helpful, however, if they could mobilize the masses on a socialist basis. If not, they would have to straddle the fence between a market economy and the socialist sector, and would fare no better than the Gorbachev reforms, sliding further into capitalist restoration.

As it is, the failure of the attempted overturn has undoubtedly strengthened the restorationist forces. But it's by no means a definitive triumph. It's only one phase of a protracted struggle. The working class has not yet spoken out, let alone made its move.

The revolutionary class consciousness of the workers has not yet come to the surface, but it surely will. The economic chaos caused by dismantling the socialist sector will bring untold misery, particularly as it takes place in the midst of a worldwide capitalist crisis. The capitalists find themselves in the kind of impasse where they can scarcely avoid an economic catastrophe at home, let alone dish out huge amounts of cash to shore up a regime in the USSR has to govern more than 290 million people.

**August 29, 1991**

## **Capitalist Thieves All Support Gorbachev/Yeltsin**

In his August 20 news conference, President George Bush condemned the Soviet coup and openly threw full U.S. support to Boris Yeltsin and Mikhail Gorbachev in the internal struggle in the USSR. It was the most open U.S. intervention in any struggle between Soviet ruling groups.

Bush has been in constant communication with Gorbachev and Yeltsin. So has British Prime Minister John Major and Margaret Thatcher was just sent to the Soviet Union. Major promoted the idea of immediate unified imperialist military intervention when the attempted coup to halt capitalist restoration took place on August 24.

# The ABC of the Crisis in the USSR: A Marxist Analysis of the Current Struggle

By Sam Marcy

Boris Yeltsin, chief architect of capitalist counter-revolution in the USSR, and his partner in crime Mikhail Gorbachev seem now to be firmly in the saddle. But it is a saddle mounted on a cow. They are going nowhere.

Economic decline and social and political disintegration is absolutely inevitable. The imperialists of the world know this and no amount of hurried state visits by John Major, the Thatcherite British prime minister, will in any way persuade George Bush to quickly open U.S. imperialism's treasuries to the USSR.

What the Gorbachev regime has been doing over the last six years in its effort to decentralize socialist planning in the USSR is like breaking up giant ocean liners in an attempt to create small rowboats. It's an ideal of the petty bourgeois merchant and shopkeeper.

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*"What the Gorbachev regime has been doing over the last six years in its effort to decentralize socialist planning in the USSR is like breaking up giant ocean liners in an attempt to create small rowboats."*

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## Decentralization A Disaster

Decentralization has brought one economic disaster after another. The attempt to break up the mines and sell them to investors from abroad is the worst example of reactionary utopianism. It's even worse with the oil industry, which is wholly integrated, as are iron and steel and the military-industrial complex.

Now the Gorbachev-Yeltsin team is in the unhappy position of trying to recentralize the economy, but finds it impossible to do so except on the existing socialist basis. The private, bourgeois sector is unable to become a viable factor in the economy.

The absurdity of chopping up the socialist sector while at the same time wildly promising the masses a higher living standard is bound to bring the real criminal conspirators to grief.

## What's At Stake?

Before it is possible to come to grips with the current struggle in the USSR--the struggle between those who are for socialism and those who want to restore capitalism--it is necessary to get some understanding of the difference between a social revolution and a political revolution (or counterrevolution).

A political revolution can involve the mobilization of large masses of people in support of the transfer of power from one group to another. If this transfer is carried out by only a small grouping, especially involving violence and unconstitutional means, it would constitute a palace coup.

But whether or not masses of people are involved, a political revolution leaves the economic, financial and social authority in the hands of the same ruling class. It does not fundamentally alter the relationship between the basic social classes: the possessing, exploiting class versus the exploited. The real power, the ownership of the means of production, remains in the hands of those who wielded it before--in modern times, the bankers, industrialists, and landlords.

There have been many political revolutions. Much rarer is a social revolution.

A social revolution transfers power from one class to another. If power is transferred away from the bankers, industrialists, and landlords to the workers and the peasants, the mass of the people, then it is a proletarian socialist revolution.

The first and classic example of this was the Paris Commune of 1871, which lasted only a few months and was drowned in blood by the armed might of the ruling class.

The first successful proletarian socialist revolution occurred in October 1917 in Russia. It has survived until the present because of untold sacrifices by the masses, who endured civil war, imperialist intervention, cold war, and threats of nuclear annihilation, not to speak of economic blockade and capitalist encirclement all these years.

The question at the moment is whether this state, the state of the workers and peasants--which has undergone formidable changes, both political and social, and has suffered a number of distortions and deformations--will in the current crisis hold onto the possibility of regaining its fundamental socialist features.

The working class and the oppressed peoples of the world, numbering in the billions, have a great stake in this contest. Its outcome could decide the future of the class struggle for years to come.

### **Imperialists Celebrate Too Soon**

Anyone reading the headlines in the major bourgeois papers at this time could draw only one conclusion: that it's all over for socialism and communism in the USSR.

As for Workers World, although for the last six years we have forecast a great many of the disastrous economic, social and political developments now taking place in the USSR, we do not share the fatalism which the capitalist press so assiduously cultivates. The capitalist class is celebrating much too soon. The working class of the USSR has not yet entered the arena of struggle.

In order to have a greater understanding of the situation in the USSR, it is necessary also to have a clearer conception of the phenomenon of a coup d'etat.

A coup d'etat--literally, a blow against the state---sometimes occurs when a small group, either military or civilian, overturns the existing government and installs itself as the new governing power. The distinctive characteristic of a coup, whether done through violence or other illegal or unconstitutional means, is that it is carried out without the participation or knowledge, and often with the indifference of the masses.

Frequently it abolishes whatever democratic institutions existed in the country. But history also shows that a coup d'etat, a change in the governing group of the state, can take place without any fundamental political changes or the abolition or restriction of democratic institutions, such as the parliament, the congress or freedom of the press.

### **Was Kennedy Assassination a Coup?**

For instance, it was widely suspected that the assassination of President John F. Kennedy was part of a coup d'etat which brought Lyndon Johnson to power. He was not only the vice president under Kennedy but had been his principal right-wing rival during the struggle for the Democratic nomination.

Lyndon Johnson, one week after his swearing in as president, appointed Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren to head a commission of investigation. Its function was to give credibility to a coverup of the coup.

The Supreme Court of the U.S. and its chief justice have no constitutional authority to assume investigative powers. They had never done so before. Their authority is restricted to cases between litigants seeking adjudication. This investigation was

even more irregular considering that Lyndon Johnson was regarded as a prime suspect in the conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy.

In his own account of what happened, Johnson himself wrote, "I knew it was not a good precedent to involve the Supreme Court in such an investigation. Chief Justice Warren knew this too and was vigorously opposed to it. I called him in anyway. Before he came, he sent word through a third party that he would not accept the assignment. He opposed serving on constitutional grounds." (Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point* [New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971].)

The jurisdiction for such an investigation properly lay in the hands of the Attorney General--Robert F. Kennedy. But he appeared to be in a demoralized state during this period and did not challenge Johnson's authority. Later, when RFK ran in the 1968 primary for the presidential nomination, he too was assassinated.

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*"Of least concern to the West was the question of democracy in the Soviet Union."*

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### **Nixon Ousted**

Richard Nixon, the next president and the third occupant in the White House during the murderous Vietnam war, often seemed on the verge of being ousted. After he attempted to set up a spy network outside of the jurisdiction of the FBI and CIA, Nixon began to be pilloried by the capitalist press. His opponents threatened to impeach him and remove him from office.

As a crisis neared, Nixon appointed General Alexander Haig as White House Chief of Staff in an effort to line the Army up behind him. But certain incriminating tapes on Nixon's conspiracy to set up an independent spy grouping fell into the hands of those who could expose them to the public.

General Haig then demanded that Attorney General Elliot Richardson, who was investigating the Watergate break-in, return the tapes. But the special prosecutor, Archibald Cox, got a court ruling against Nixon which was later appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The issue then was whether the president was legally obligated to obey a Supreme Court order. Could the judicial branch constitutionally demand that the executive branch carry out its order?

It was a classical example of whether a coup d'etat could triumph under these circumstances, and

the issue was whether General Haig could represent the military establishment as a whole and bring it to bear against the Supreme Court.

But the capitalist press and most of the institutions of the bourgeois state were solidly opposed to Nixon. This included the military. Finally Nixon resigned to avoid impeachment.

Earlier, Gen. Douglas MacArthur had pushed for overall political and military authority during the Korea crisis. A few years later, Senator Joseph McCarthy attempted to subdue the Senate and the House. Only when he stepped on the toes of the Army did the tide begin to turn against his wild witch hunt. The U.S. capitalist press and media continually gush about their democracy, seeming oblivious to these coup attempts.

Such is the glorious democracy in the U.S.!

### Character of Struggle in USSR

Briefly, this is what happened in the most recent phase of the struggle in the USSR:

On Aug. 19, eight of the most important members of the Soviet government, military and security forces announced the formation of a State Committee for the State of Emergency and effectively put Mikhail Gorbachev, who was on vacation in the Crimea, under house arrest. Who were the eight? They were not an obscure grouping. Rather, they represented the greater part of the government itself. This aspect the capitalist press leaves out.

The eight were: Gennadi I. Yanayev, Vice President of the USSR; Valentin S. Pavlov, Prime Minister; Gen. Dmitri T. Yazov, Defense Minister; Aleksandr I. Tizyakov, president of an association of state industries; Vladimir A. Kryuchkov, Chairman of the K.G.B.; Vasily A. Starodubtsev, Chairman of the Farmer's Union; Oleg D. Baklanov, first deputy chairman of the Defense Council; and Boris K. Pugo, Interior Minister.

This grouping was in reality more representative of the state than the two individuals against whom the coup was directed, Gorbachev and Yeltsin.

Their idea was to get this Emergency Committee ratified by the Supreme Soviet and the Congress of Deputies. In that case, whatever may have been considered unconstitutional would be ratified by legal bodies.

The move by the Emergency Committee was completely bloodless. The imperialist media and the Yeltsin forces make much of the fact that three people died, and at first claimed they had been shot by soldiers. But it was later confirmed they had been crushed by accident during the movement of armored personnel carriers in Moscow (just as U.S. personnel are killed nearly every time the Pentagon deploys its forces).

During the entire course of Soviet history, when various government leaders were removed by the party, it scarcely caused a ripple in the imperialist countries. Were this attempt at a takeover merely a coup d'etat in the political sense of the term, it would have caused little concern among the Western imperialist countries.

A palace coup or revolution would not have aroused their indignation or the swift and feverish preparations to intervene. It was not the political changes or changes in personnel that were of significance to the imperialist bourgeoisie. In other words, it was not the political revolution that concerned the imperialists abroad and the bourgeois elements in the Soviet Union.

The fact of the matter is that the Emergency Committee was attempting to return to the course of socialist construction and to abolish, to the extent possible, the ruinous and chaotic consequences of Gorbachev's introduction of capitalist relations. What was involved was a changeover from one social system to another. In other words, it was a social counterrevolution that was at stake, not just political changes.

### Question of Democracy

Of least concern to the West was the question of democracy in the Soviet Union. Imperialism is the biggest violator of genuine democracy, the democracy of the workers, at home and abroad. The men they hail as democrats have now closed Pravda, purged other organs of the press and media, and pretty much outlawed the Communist Party itself, with millions of members.

The matter reduced itself to this quintessential element: that the Gorbachev regime, immediately after he became party general secretary at the Central Committee plenary meeting in 1985, began slowly and gradually a course of development which lead straight to capitalist restoration at home and the intervention of the imperialist bourgeoisie. For too long a time, the Communist Party leadership, in disregard of revolutionary tradition, and resting on privileges which it had accumulated over the years for itself, went along with Gorbachev.

The Gorbachev grouping seemed to have won an accommodation from the imperialist bourgeoisie. Slow and gradual nuclear disarmament and improvement of relations appeared on the order of the day.

Not clearly understood was that the imperialist countries, while overflowing with flattery of Gorbachev and effusive expressions of accommodation with the USSR, were moving at a snail's pace to lift their virtual economic blockade. Only in the last few days, really, has the ban on trade with the



USSR been lifted. Only in the last few weeks has the European Community, the community of imperialist robbers and colonialist predators, begun to deal with the USSR on a somewhat equal basis.

In the meantime, the country has been opened up to the ravages of the imperialist monopolies who are making deals with individual republics of the kind which could only reduce the Soviet Union to a neocolonialist status. It was not until a scandalous joint venture involving the fabulously rich Kazakhstan oil fields was accidentally made public that the masses got a view of the extent to which the imperialists had encroached and had found willing tools to virtually sell out to the giant Chevron multinational. The deal involved the most important energy resources of the USSR--the vast Tenghiz oil fields.

But those are only the outer manifestations. The policies of the Gorbachev administration at home were becoming increasingly ruinous. The effort, under the euphemism of a market economy, to reintroduce private ownership of the basic means of production meant bringing back the relationship of exploiter and exploited in the USSR. This finally touched off the emergency measures to try and halt this social and political catastrophe.

It is now backhandedly admitted by the imperialist bourgeoisie that the economic conditions, the shortages, the empty shelves, the idle factories and so on, are all the result of the attempt to dismantle the socialist projects in the USSR.

### **Six Years of Perestroika**

Much to the surprise of the bourgeois reformers there as well as their Western masters, the task of bringing about a reestablishment of capitalism has proven to be stupendously difficult. The Gorbachev program is now well into its sixth year, and the easy dismantling of the socialist system which the imperialists expected has not taken place to this very day.

This explains why the imperialists are so unwilling to extend cash or even credit to a willing group of neocolonialist stooges. The task of overturning, of obliterating the revolutionary socialist achievements of the USSR may well prove impossible.

However, the masses for most of this period were unaware of what was contemplated by the Gorbachev conspirators. To this very day, when the Gorbachev-Yeltsin alliance seems to be in power, the bourgeois reformers have not ceased to make wildly demagogic promises of a higher standard of living. In reality, however, their plans call for cut-backs, layoffs and a general reduction in living standards. The Yeltsin-Gorbachev economists are at wit's end over how to explain that harder, not easier

times are ahead if the introduction of capitalism is to take place, even as the politicians of the restoration are making the most scandalous promises of a higher standard of living. No wonder confusion reigns supreme.

The Gorbachev press is monolithic in advertising its virtues. However, those in the opposition who want to expose the true character of the bourgeois reforms have really had no voice, either in the government or in the press. And now the leading organs of the Communist Party have been muzzled.

The irony of this historic episode is that the confusion has lasted so long. Finally, however, it became virtually impossible to continue further on the course of capitalist restoration without there being an upheaval of one sort or another.

The coup attempt, if we may properly call it that, came as a last resort in the face of an impending disaster to socialist construction. These eight men, and many of their supporters in the government who became more and more knowledgeable and fearful of the consequences of bourgeois restoration, decided it was the only course to take.

### **What Were They Afraid Of?**

Yet they acted timidly and with hesitation. What was their greatest fear? It was retaliation by the imperialist bourgeoisie--the continuing nightmare which has hung over the Soviet republic since day one of the October socialist revolution.

Hence they plodded along on a course of action which was calculated to take the imperialist bourgeoisie off guard.

They issued an utterly inept and scandalously vague statement calculated to assure the imperialist bourgeoisie that not only would foreign policy toward the imperialists remain the same but that the reforms at home would continue. Not even the word socialism was mentioned in the manifesto, which promised that private property and the market economy would continue.

It is not unusual for those attempting a coup, especially when there is a swift change of government in a country, to assure the world that there will be no fundamental changes and that foreign policy will continue as before.

For instance, when Johnson took over as president, his first statements were calculated to assure the world that there would not be any fundamental change, especially in regard to the war in Vietnam.

Especially in countries that are militarily weak, whenever there's a change in government the most important element is to assure that no fundamental changes would be made of the type that would enrage the imperialists.

But this manifesto by the Emergency Committee could never convince the imperialist bourgeoisie that they were not planning a return to socialist construction. Because the very men who constituted themselves as the new government were known as relatively hard-line Communists, even though they had gone very far with the Gorbachev reforms. Nevertheless, they were regarded as opposed to the restoration of capitalism.

Their manifesto, then, was a great miscalculation. The imperialist bourgeoisie wasn't fooled in the least. It immediately began to mobilize world public opinion and even intervened actively on behalf of the counterrevolution.

## **Conspiracy Over the Heads of the Masses**

But the worst mistake of all was that they violated one of the profoundest teachings of Marxism on the relationship of insurrection to a coup d'etat, the relationship between the masses and the leaders. The way they went about it was to indulge in the crudest form of Blanquism, trying to carry out a conspiracy without mass support. Nevertheless, the masses on the whole accepted the coup.

This could be seen by their rejection of Boris Yeltsin's call to go out on a general strike. But the Emergency Committee deprived the masses of being able to give active support to the struggle against Yeltsin and Gorbachev. This group of state and party leaders had not agitated, had not organized, had not publicly committed themselves to the revival of socialist construction. Certainly, they gave hints now and then critical of the Gorbachev reforms, but there was never any general attempt at agitation and propaganda against the bourgeois reforms and the continuing slide toward capitalist restoration.

By not taking the masses into their confidence, these leaders disregarded the essence of the October 1917 insurrection. They should have openly opposed Gorbachev as the Bolsheviks opposed the Kerensky regime. The Bolsheviks agitated for the insurrection openly. At the same time they were continually meeting in secret to work out the plans for the insurrection. They had every justification for this, since Kerensky himself was plotting the destruction of the revolutionary Bolshevik leadership of the Soviets.

The czar's chief general, Kornilov, was involved in his own conspiracy. The Bolsheviks promoted a revolutionary course for the overthrow of the Kerensky regime quite openly, while secretly organizing the mechanics and crucial timing.

The Emergency Committee in this case finally achieved a consensus among themselves to get rid

of the bourgeois restorationist grouping. But where they failed was in their estimate of the reaction of the imperialist bourgeoisie and most of all in their failure to mobilize the masses and the rank and file of the soldiers. The masses were left in the dark and became a prey to confusion and unawareness in general.

Nevertheless, the mass sentiment can be gauged by this: When Yeltsin, the principal architect for counterrevolution, was taken by surprise by the coup (that much the Emergency Committee planned well), he hastily called for a general strike of the workers. It was a near-total failure, as almost everybody now admits.

From there on it should have been clear to the committee that it was necessary to take action, firmly and without hesitation, not merely against Gorbachev but against Yeltsin. That whatever else they did, they had to move now. What stopped them?

Fear of imperialist aggression. Failure to mobilize the masses actively. Yeltsin was feverishly mobilizing the counterrevolutionary elements while the committee stood still, either hesitant or divided over taking the decisive step of attacking. At such a moment, indecision is ruinous.

The most devastating error was a failure to make a clear-cut case over a protracted period of time that the so-called market economy was in reality a move to restore the old capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. Because they had not said so in so many words, the Emergency Committee left the masses at the mercy of bourgeois concepts of legality introduced by the Gorbachev administration to cover up its destruction of socialist norms.

## **Bourgeois Legality**

The Gorbachev grouping had abandoned socialist legality and substituted for it bourgeois legality. The Emergency Committee was not bound in principle to respect bourgeois concepts of legality. Furthermore, they should have borne in mind the difference between a social and a political revolution.

The Gorbachev grouping had claimed it was carrying out a political revolution. But it had overstepped the bounds of a political revolution and was attempting to disestablish and in fact to ruin the class structure of the workers' state. Therefore, the committee had every right to promote not only general socialist criticism of the Gorbachev regime but revolutionary communist agitation for its overthrow.

When faced with a social counterrevolution, where a transfer of class power is involved, legality is inadequate considering the magnitude of the issue. But the committee had socialist legality on its side.

And even had this not been true, it could have been guided by the advice of another leader at another time.

It was Abraham Lincoln who said in his First Inaugural Address, on March 4, 1861: "This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it." Lincoln was in the middle of a class struggle between the slaves and slave owners. The slave owners pretended to legality, declaring states' rights.

The committee should have invoked the revolutionary right of the people in order to mobilize the masses against what was in reality a cold, clandestine takeover of a good part of the government by the bourgeois elements led by Gorbachev and Yeltsin.

### **Union of Republics is an Economic Reality**

The capitalist press is viewing the dismemberment of the USSR as a fait accompli. We have continually pointed out that the greatest danger in the bourgeois reforms was that the collapse of centralized planning set in motion centrifugal forces which threatened to turn all against all, as in Yugoslavia.

Now the Baltic republics, the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Moldavia, Byelorussia, and Georgia are all said to be asserting their independence. While of course we have pointed out this danger, and it is a great stride backward in the decentralization and breakup of the Soviet Union, nevertheless it is necessary to show its limitations and possible direction.

It is one thing to juridically or politically separate from the USSR. We communists, basing ourselves on the teachings of Leninism, have continued to adhere to the right of self-determination, including the right to secede, which has been written into all the constitutions since the formation of the USSR.

But it is something else again, 74 years after the Revolution and after more than a dozen five-year plans, to equate a juridical or political separation with economic separation.

In the first place, the Ukraine and Byelorussia have been politically independent for years, although acting in unison with the Soviet government. Both have seats in the UN and separate embassies in all the countries that recognize the Soviet Union.

When it comes to negotiations on grain, for instance, the Ukrainian delegation generally handles them. Although the imperialist governments refuse to admit it, they nevertheless have recognized them.

What about the Baltic states? What does their independence really amount to? Economically they can scarcely exist unless the Soviet Union provides them with oil at the cheapest prices and a market for their consumer goods. They can't possibly hope to compete with the imperialist West in the production of consumer goods. The USSR is their best customer.

In the Baltic area, except for Latvia which has a great revolutionary and Bolshevik tradition, the biggest problem for the Soviet Union is the reservoir of Nazi and fascist ideology in the ruling classes, particularly among the landed gentry. This is reinforced by a right-wing Catholic hierarchy, especially in Lithuania.

The real significance of this area to the Soviet leaders is of a military character. They fear it will become a base for the U.S. military.

We should not regard the disintegration of the union as a finished process. Moldavia has announced its independence 100 times. It nevertheless is an economically integrated part of the USSR. It and others are not economically viable on their own. What brought this about is the great economic and technological progress of the USSR over 70 years of socialist construction.

To break up the union politically is to make economic regression inevitable. This goes for all the Soviet republics.

It is quite impossible to establish a stable capitalist system on the basis of economic disunity, and any attempt would be costly in human life and welfare. One only has to look at Yugoslavia. How can the Soviet bourgeois reformers avoid the lesson of Yugoslavia? It is literally staring them in the face.

Yugoslavia has not only become impoverished but is a scene of fratricidal struggle from which only the imperialists can gain. The country as a whole is sinking into virtual oblivion.

What we are seeing now is only one phase of the class struggle. The emergence on the political arena of the working class is absolutely inevitable. And this is precisely what is causing the imperialists concern whenever they are prodded by bourgeois academia and capitalist politicians in general to advance aid and credits to Gorbachev and Yeltsin.

**September 5, 1991**

# No Pardons for Nazis!

*(Following is the text of a statement issued by Workers World Party on Sept. 7th in New York City. On that day WWP held a demonstration against the exoneration of Nazi war criminals by the bourgeois nationalist government of Lithuania and the dictatorial dissolving of the Congress of Deputies.*

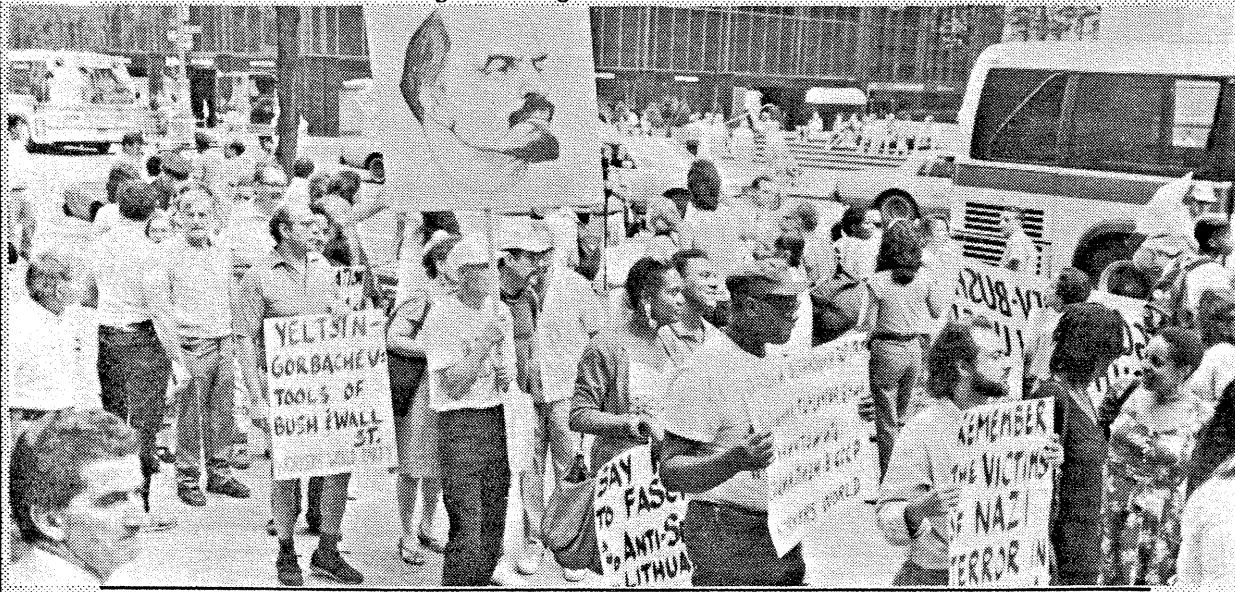
## **Stop Lithuania's exoneration of convicted war criminals! Protest the Yeltsin-Gorbachev dissolution of the Soviet democratic parliament!**

Lithuanian authorities are releasing Nazi collaborators and issuing "certificates of innocence" to thousands of convicted Nazi war criminals. This is a terrible insult to the millions who died fighting Hitler's army and the millions of victims of the Nazi terror. It is also a dangerous encouragement for pro-fascist elements in the Baltics and elsewhere. The so-called "democrats" now in authority in Lithuania are giving aid and comfort to the wave of neo-Nazism and anti-Semitism that is spreading through Europe.

At the same time, the Yeltsin-Gorbachev factions in the Soviet Union have carried out a reactionary coup. In a dictatorial move, they abolished the Congress of People's Deputies, the only democratic parliament elected by the people of the whole Soviet Union. While claiming to be "democrats", Yeltsin and Gorbachev are ruling by decree and taking the most decidedly anti-democratic measures.

The big business media in the United States has given unprecedented support to Yeltsin and Gorbachev because they represent a pro-capitalist, pro-imperialist program. This program in reality stands for lower wages, more unemployment, more racism and sexism, higher rents, higher prices and higher profits for business. These are not popular images so the media here prefers to portray Yeltsin and Gorbachev as "democrats" and "reformers" waving the flag of "freedom". But progressive people here should note that the "freedom" flag that Yeltsin has been shown waving is nothing but the old Czarist Russian flag--the flag of racism, anti-Semitic pogroms, and oppression of workers and peasants. It is not an accident that the forces unleashed by the Yeltsin-Gorbachev program and the breaking up of the Soviet Union have given rise to the rehabilitation of Nazi war criminals in Lithuania.

We of Workers World Party are demonstrating at the USSR government offices here today to protest any pardons or support to fascists and Nazis; and to protest the Yeltsin-Gorbachev dictatorial abolition of the Congress of People's Deputies. We want to alert working and oppressed people here that our interests coincide with the interests of Soviet working people and not with Yeltsin and Gorbachev--the darlings of George Bush and the U.S. media.





# The Gorbachev-Yeltsin Dictatorial Coup

By Sam Marcy

Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, the two darlings of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the architects of capitalist restoration in the USSR, moved Sept. 2 to abolish the Soviet parliament, the Congress of People's Deputies.

By Sept. 3, fearful that the masses might intervene in this unconstitutional process, the Gorbachev-Yeltsin counterrevolutionary grouping hurriedly called the Congress of Deputies back into session and presented them with a new plan to restructure the government. But all the usual responsibilities of a parliament are transferred away to the republics, which themselves have no general authority beyond their respective republic territories.

The power rests completely in the hands of a small group picked by Yeltsin and Gorbachev. Forcing the Congress to accept this complete usurpation of power is an outrageous form of coercion.

The move to dissolve the Congress was reminiscent of Hitler's takeover of full government power in Germany in 1933. Under cover of a fraudulent claim that the Communists had burned Germany's parliament building, the Reichstag, Hitler launched an anti-communist furor and got the Reichstag to vote him dictatorial powers. He then browbeat the Reichstag assembly into virtually dissolving itself. This was the most important step in establishing the fascist dictatorship.

The present Congress of People's Deputies in the USSR was elected in 1989 on the basis of universal suffrage. The defenders of the pro-capitalist restoration hailed it as the first attempt at a democratically elected congress representative of the people.

According to the current constitution and all previous ones, the USSR has a bicameral government. All legislation has to be approved by both the Congress of Deputies and the Congress of Nationalities. Where there is a disagreement between them, each chamber selects a committee to negotiate with the other.

As we have said before in these pages, the Congress was a bourgeois parliament. While not as representative of the masses as the Soviets under the Leninist regime, nevertheless it offered the people an opportunity to be heard. The Congress was acclaimed by the bourgeoisie everywhere as an important step toward democracy. They praised, indeed flattered the Gorbachev regime for promoting it.

Nevertheless, the bourgeoisie was fearful of the fact that at least one third of the deputies were Communists.

## Step Toward Fascist Dictatorship

The announcement that the Congress was to be dissolved--on the "recommendation" of Gorbachev, Yeltsin and a handful of leaders of the republics--is clearly unconstitutional. It is a step toward establishing a fascist dictatorship.

Whether this happens or not depends on the masses of workers and peasants and the people in general. Can they rise to the occasion to halt the process of counterrevolution that is leading to a totalitarian form of government?

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***"The announcement that the Congress was to be dissolved -- on the 'recommendation' of Gorbachev and Yeltsin and a handful of leaders of the republics -- is clearly unconstitutional. It is a step toward establishing a fascist dictatorship."***

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The Gorbachev-Yeltsin group's fear of the masses was pointedly underlined on the Sept. 3 broadcast of "Crossfire" on CNN. There Jerry Hough from Duke University, the only one to correctly predict Gorbachev's election in 1985, said that "the general strike called by Yeltsin was a flop." He said the "demonstrations in Moscow were small." And he said that "Gorbachev is supported by only a part of the Soviet Army that is Western oriented."

Gorbachev announced he was acting in concert with Yeltsin, his so-called rival. In reality, Yeltsin is a fellow conspirator who holds a more extreme bourgeois restorationist view than Gorbachev. They have nevertheless united to abolish the one popularly elected governmental organ that can pass legislation and order the executive to carry it out.

This effort by Gorbachev and Yeltsin to shore up their authority, made in concert with several leaders of the republics, is wholly illegal and unconstitutional. Assuming these leaders from the republics have authority back home--which is doubtful--they have no authority to order the abolition of the one governing institution that was elected by the masses throughout the entire Soviet Union.

## Right-Wing Reign of Terror

How could all this possibly happen? It comes on the heels of a reign of terror unleashed against

communists and progressives throughout the country following the Emergency Committee's attempt to halt Gorbachev's course of capitalist restoration. First came banning the Communist Party and removing many top government and party officials. Several were reported as suicides.

The former Soviet Ambassador to the U.S., Alexander Bessmertnykh, told the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* that the denunciations and accusations following the failed coup attempt were "a direct copy of what happened in 1937. Even when the president says the Emergency Committee are criminals--he has no right to do that [without a trial]."

The Congress of People's Deputies, which met today, scarcely had a quorum. Hundreds did not show up because of intimidation, arrest and persecution. Many may be in hiding. Deputies suspected of opposition to the Gorbachev-Yeltsin takeover are being accused of supporting the coup.

Who is carrying out this intimidation?

### **Paramilitary, Private Police**

At the October 1988 session of the USSR Supreme Soviet, a paramilitary police force was established. This paramilitary police force is not under the jurisdiction of the military or the security forces. It is active in intimidating, arresting and otherwise terrorizing communist and progressive legislators, officials and rank and file.

There are also private armed organizations. It is not well known, but the Weirich Foundation and its head have been active for years in the Soviet Union, training security forces for the private sector. A union of detectives has been formed. Other private security organizations guard so-called cooperatives, which are private enterprises, against the masses.

This is a counterrevolutionary challenge to the established security forces under the KGB. It is a structure parallel to the state apparatus at a time when the latter appears to be paralyzed and divided, its top officialdom are Gorbachev and Yeltsin appointees.

The imperialist bourgeoisie of the West is taking an ambiguous position on this antidemocratic move, just as their predecessors did when Hitler consolidated his power.

Gorbachev says he has to reorganize the government in order to avoid an economic catastrophe. But these are the very same words Hitler used in his Reichstag speech. His excuse for assuming dictatorial powers was that he'd be better able to deal with the disastrous economic situation, high unemployment and so on.

Let no one forget that Hitler couched all his assaults on the working class in demagogic terms.

Even the name of his party--the National Socialist German Workers Party--was meant to encompass all sorts of elements, even as he mobilized them against the working class organizations.

Gorbachev and Yeltsin are now ruling by decree. They have strong-armed the Presidium, the executive committee of the Congress, to dissolve itself under threat. What about parliamentary immunity? The presiding officer has immunity, but are the rest of the deputies being harassed, even threatened with imprisonment?

This dissolution of the Congress of People's Deputies has to be put into perspective. First they were threatened to the point where many didn't even show up. Then they were confronted with a so-called recommendation to dissolve. This has all the earmarks of a classical counterrevolutionary coup d'etat.

### **Imperialist Press Keeps a Monolithic Silence**

The initial reaction of the leading imperialist press organs--the New York Times, Washington Post, others--was to merely report that a new leadership is being established. They failed to call attention to the fact that their favorites, Gorbachev and Yeltsin, have dissolved the one legal, popularly elected governing body in the USSR, which the bourgeoisie until recently praised as an achievement of glasnost and perestroika.

Some of the progressives in the USSR are calling this a second coup attempt. It should be noted that when the Emergency Committee tried to take over two weeks ago in order to halt the counterrevolution, it did so a few days before the USSR Congress was to meet. Its perspective was to have the new leaders ratified by the Congress and the Presidium.

What has happened now, however, is a classical counterrevolutionary coup. Its aim is not to get ratification from a popularly elected, democratic institution, but to dissolve the Congress. It has already banned the Communist Party. It is really allowing only those groups that support Yeltsin or Gorbachev to function. These two can only be called a dictatorial duumvirate.

The monolithic imperialist press plays down the significance of imperialist intervention. Yet there are constant consultations between Gorbachev and Yeltsin and the imperialist leaders, especially John Major, Margaret Thatcher and George Bush. Even Gorbachev in his public speeches this week attributed his success in large part to international support. By that he meant the intervention of the Western imperialist powers, particularly the U.S. and Britain.

However, the recently forged alliance between Gorbachev and Yeltsin is a precarious, unstable setup in view of the contradictions between them that have not been altogether erased.

### **Breaking Up the Union**

Much of the capitalist press is concerned with the centrifugal forces that appear to be dissolving the Soviet Union. This should be weighed against the stark fact that the republics are an integral part of a 70-year-old economic system.

The republics are forced to stick with the union for economic reasons. If they juridically or politically separate, it should be remembered that was their legal right in the first place. It was never denied by any legal or constitutional provision.

Most of the current leaders in the republics were put in by the Gorbachev forces, who ousted others who failed to go along with their program for change. These leaders' legal authority extends only to the republics. They have no authority over the Congress of the USSR. Yet its dissolution is being presented as an action taken by Gorbachev along with the heads of most of the republics.

Only a complete restoration of bourgeois private property--only the final dismantling of the economic system--could lay the basis for the full dismemberment of the USSR.

The fact that Gorbachev and even Yeltsin have gotten together to save the economic integration of the republics is a confession of their inability to peacefully destroy the socialist sector, the achievement of 70 years of technological, scientific and industrial development.

### **U.S. Hand in Counterrevolution**

In order to understand the U.S. attitude toward the current struggles in the USSR, we must know first of all that the imperialists are not disinterested observers. Rather, the failed resolve of the Emergency Committee in the ill-fated coup against Gorbachev and Yeltsin was due in large measure to the immediate intervention of all the imperialist powers. These were the same allies that just last winter carried out a merciless and genocidal war against Iraq.

To fail to take account of the U.S. hand in the counterrevolutionary developments in the USSR is to ignore what is probably the most important factor in the subsequent overthrow of most of the government.

A coup is the product of acute instability in social and political relations. The political and sometimes the class structure may be on the verge of collapse. If this coincides with a period when the masses are passive or indifferent, or have not yet entered the

political arena, then a coup d'etat can be the outcome.

There are areas of the world where coups occur more or less regularly. They are the product of acute conditions and, moreover, are instigated and promoted by foreign powers.

The U.S. imperialist establishment is the supreme architect of such coups. More than any other ancient or modern empire, the empire of finance capital has accumulated experience in manipulating governing groups in subjugated countries. It has set up and then overthrown many a dictator, replacing them with democratic faces. Imperialist businessmen in these countries often appear unconcerned with the changes in progress, saying they are "doing business during alterations."

### **August Coup Attempt and Union Treaty**

The immediate, objective basis for the attempted coup in August was the imminent signing of the union treaty. It was a treaty of disunion that threatened to dismember the Soviet Union not just politically but as an economic union based on socialist construction.

It threatened to fracture the integrated scientific, technological and industrial infrastructure of the USSR, which is still based on a planned economy. By virtue of that fact alone, it threatened to disintegrate the military-industrial complex and to divide and split up the military command.

No greater danger to the Soviet Union could be conceived of except for outright intervention by the U.S.

In reporting events in the USSR, the imperialist media drip with sanctimony and self-righteousness. One would never know that the history of the U.S. is one of savage repression of Native, Black and other oppressed peoples and ruthless exploitation of the working class. To these preachers of democracy, capitalism is the only natural, civilized society. The many fierce blows against working people here, the decline in living standards, the attempt to codify into law outright strike-breaking activity--all these throwbacks to the 19th century are ignored in their reality.

They present the evolution of the capitalist system as an example of pure democracy. But in reality we have a plutocracy based on the rule of bankers and industrialists. In the epoch of imperialism, their reign depends on genocidal wars and suppression of the insurrectionary colonial peoples.

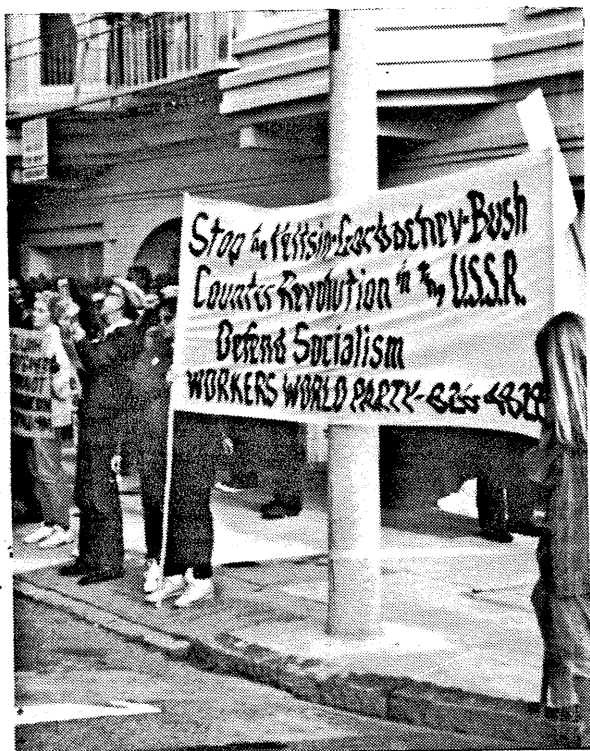
We are told that the United States is and always has been a democratically constituted state, free from coups d'etat. This is a fiction cultivated by bourgeois historians and the capitalist press.

## Coups D'etat In U.S. History

No, coups d'etat in the United States have had great historical significance. An examination of them will help to illuminate the current crisis in the USSR.

Let us begin with the coup carried out with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. It was followed by the assassination of his brother, Robert F. Kennedy, five years later when he was running in the Democratic primary for president.

John Kennedy had won the Democratic presidential nomination in 1960 after a bitter, venomous struggle against Lyndon Johnson, his right-wing



*Workers World Party demonstration, Soviet Consulate in San Francisco against Yeltsin and Gorbachev and in defense of socialism.*

opponent. Johnson was regarded by many at the time as the epitome of racism, a representative of the Southern Dixiecrat view of the rising civil rights and Black liberation struggles.

After President Kennedy was shot in Dallas, Johnson was sworn in as president within hours. One of his first acts in office was to send a memorandum to the Chief Justice of the United States, Earl Warren, asking him to conduct an investigation. Johnson, widely regarded by the broad progressive movement as a prime suspect in the assassination, showed the greatest contempt for public opinion by appointing himself to be in charge of the investigation.

As Johnson later recalled in his autobiography, "I knew it was not a good precedent to involve the Supreme Court in such an investigation. Chief Justice Warren knew this too and was vigorously opposed to it. I called him in anyway. Before he came, he sent word through a third party that he would not accept the assignment. He opposed serving on constitutional grounds." (Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point* [New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971].)

What could be more crass, more offensive to prevailing opinion, more absurd than the prime suspect in the assassination coup appointing an unwilling investigator?

This is the very ruling class that is now talking so sanctimoniously about the unconstitutional coup in the USSR.

## Political Causes Covered Up

The Warren Commission report was a complete whitewash. It overlooked the deeper causes of the assassination.

First, there was the Pentagon military command's dissatisfaction with Kennedy's conduct of the struggle with Cuba. They had favored a simultaneous strike by U.S. naval, army and air forces after the collapse of the mercenary group masked as liberators who had invaded Cuba in April 1961 at the Bay of Pigs.

On the very day Kennedy arrived in Dallas, The Dallas Morning News carried a full-page advertisement accusing him of treason and being in effect an agent of Moscow. It was signed by Bernard Weissman, a carpet salesperson. Weissman told the Warren Commission he didn't know where the funds for the ad came from. But an investigation showed that the John Birch Society had put up most of the money. Weissman could only have been a front for the CIA, the FBI and/or the ultra right.

Another element in the assassination was the racists' fierce anger against Kennedy over the burning issue of civil rights.

There was another coup not long after that is equally significant. It involved President Richard Nixon.

## Nixon's Conspiracy

Nixon succeeded Johnson, basically as a result of the polarization in the country arising out of the genocidal war against Vietnam. The most right-wing faction of the imperialist bourgeoisie, headed by Air Force Chief of Staff General Curtis LeMay, urged nuclear bombing of Vietnam when he called publicly for authority to "bomb the Vietnamese back into the Stone Age."



But he and his colleagues could not carry the rest of the military establishment or the ruling class. A greater and more significant portion, while of course wanting victory in Southeast Asia, believed they could overwhelm the oppressed masses in that area by sheer military preponderance and economic might.

But with each succeeding day, especially after the great Tet Offensive, the ruling class began to have doubts about the entire project of subjugating such a revolutionary people 10,000 miles from the U.S.

In the meantime, the very foundations of the imperialist military establishment began to be shaken by an unprecedented anti-war struggle together with the most significant revolutionary upsurge of the Black masses. The ruling class became divided over whether to continue its mad, adventurous policy.

Under these circumstances, Nixon, the 1968 Republican presidential nominee, promised a way out through victory and negotiation with the USSR and China. It was all calculated to end the Vietnam war with "honor." All this while continuing a racist, merciless bombing of Vietnam, Laos and later Cambodia.

Once he became president, Nixon was besieged by both left and right within the establishment, and by an aroused, progressive mass anti-war movement and civil rights rebellions. Nixon found both the FBI and CIA unsuitable or unwilling instruments for his plans to win the wars at home and abroad.

He called a secret and illegal meeting with all the intelligence chiefs on June 5, 1970. Its objective, as we wrote later, was to achieve "a plan to widen the government's domestic spy network and increase its efficiency." ("The meaning of Nixon's June 5 conspiracy," *Workers World*, Aug. 24, 1973) However, FBI head J. Edgar Hoover broke away from the conspiracy because he refused to yield bureaucratic control over his personal domain.

Nixon then established an independent spy network that became known as the Plumbers.

The ruling class, unprepared and unwilling to continue the war, used what were in reality minor infractions of bourgeois conduct in high office (the Watergate scandal) to threaten impeachment and drive Nixon from office.

### Civil War Period

These were in effect coups d'état. But they are never given their right name by bourgeois historians. The same is true when we consider the Civil War in the United States and its outcome.

The victorious North at least programmatically stood for the liberation of the Black masses from slavery and the restoration of their rights as free

people, together with their rights to property and land ("40 acres and a mule").

Of course, Marxists must relentlessly demonstrate that the outcome of the Civil war was a victory for Northern capitalists as against the slave-holding oligarchy. We must energetically expose the hypocrisy of the Northern capitalist class in relation to its pretensions for freedom of the Black masses.

Nevertheless, while the basis of the struggle was a clash between two antagonistic and irreconcilable social systems-- chattel slavery and wage slavery--the slaves were in an insurrectionary mood. They were organizing, taking arms in their own hands and acting as a revolutionary class.

It belittles the significance of the Civil War to reduce it to only a struggle between the North and the South, without taking into account the resoluteness and heroism of the Black masses. That this class was beginning to act in its own interest for liberation was a vital factor in the struggle.

President Abraham Lincoln was the mediator in this class struggle.

The revolutionary whites in the progressive, anti-slavery movement in the North all understood that the struggle was for the liberation of the Black masses and against slavery. Liberation meant full liberation and not compromise.

The considerable reservoir of racism that also existed in the North was initiated and generated by the capitalist bourgeoisie. They had an economic interest in overturning the Southern oligarchy, but feared and distrusted any kind of real freedom for the slaves. They were afraid the former slaves could easily ally themselves with the Northern working class.

Having crushed the Southern oligarchy, the Northern armies marched into the South with the specific mission of assisting and implementing the freedom of the slaves.

### Assassination of Lincoln

Within days of the end of the Civil War, Lincoln was assassinated and Andrew Johnson became president. Lincoln's death amounted to a successful coup. His assassin, John Wilkes Booth, was not a "lone gunman" but a Confederate sympathizer involved in an elaborate conspiracy.

Johnson, the new president, was a southern Democrat. The radical Republicans denounced him for his Reconstruction program.

The Reconstruction period is generally regarded as lasting from 1865 to 1867. At the beginning, Johnson tried to shift control of the South from the old planting aristocracy, which had been defeated, to small farmers and artisans by disenfranchising Con-

federate officers and making certain property liable to confiscation.

He appointed provisional governors in the Southern states. Under these governors, most Southern states abolished slavery and ratified the 13th Amendment. But then they enacted the so-called "Black Codes," which made it virtually impossible for the freed slaves to exercise their civil and democratic rights.

Soon the Confederate leaders who had earlier been disenfranchised were being elected to state and federal offices. The Radical Republicans in Congress, led by Thaddeus Stevens, refused to seat these Southern representatives, and passed various Reconstruction acts designed to protect Black people. These included an act enlarging the Freedmen's Bureau and a Civil Rights Act, passed over President Johnson's vetoes.

Black civil rights were incorporated in the 14th Amendment. The Radical Republicans enacted the Reconstruction Act of 1867, which set up five military districts in the South and made U.S. Army authority supreme. Congress then voted to impeach Johnson four times, the last time in 1868. He was not convicted--that took a two-thirds majority--but his program was scuttled.

Reconstruction was finally ended in 1876 after the disputed election between Rutherford B. Hayes and Samuel J. Tilden. In order to win the electoral commission's votes for Hayes, the Republicans agreed to withdraw Federal troops from the South. In this Compromise of 1876, the revolutionary masses, who had never been given the land, were crushed as the North withdrew its armed forces. This left the former slave owners free to reimpose a reign of terror and reduce Black people to landless sharecroppers.

A student looking up examples of coups d'etat in the United States, however, would find none in any of the history books. The very same people who speak so disparagingly of Soviet history participate in a cover-up of the real struggles in U.S. history.

**September 12, 1991**

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## Who is Boris Yeltsin? Why Bush Says He's a "Hero"

On August 20, Boris Yeltsin stood before a mob waving the flag of old czarist Russia. He bellowed for "summary punishment" of those who carried out the coup.

Then he was called away to take a phone call. George Bush was on the line. Yeltsin rushed to hear his master's voice.

It was a telling moment. Boris Yeltsin and his allies openly call for a complete restoration of capitalism where the first workers' revolution took place. That's why the Aug. 20 Financial Times characterized Yeltsin as "the last hope." Yeltsin is the bosses' darling.

Bush hailed Yeltsin as a "courageous fight for freedom." Who is this great "democrat?"

Not long ago, Yeltsin announced that he was issuing a decree to ban the Communist Party from all workplaces in the Russian Republic. Is it democratic to deprive millions of communist workers of the right of free political association on the job? That's just like the worst excesses of McCarthyism of the 1950s here in the U.S. And this in the Soviet Union, a workers' state.

## Yeltsin Says Homeless in U.S. are lucky!

On a visit to the U.S. a few years ago, Yeltsin stated "The average person in Russia would feel lucky to change places with one of the homeless people here in New York City." If Yeltsin's capitalist program were instituted in the USSR, there would be many such "lucky" homeless people there.

On the same U.S. visit Yeltsin dismissed communism as "only a dream." Twenty million Soviet citizens died defending this "dream" against the Nazi invaders in World War II. It was the belief in Socialism, that everyone of every nationality be treated equally, have a place to live, meaningful work, access to medical care and education, without hunger, that rebuilt the Soviet Union after the Nazi destruction -- not U.S. imperialist aid.

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## Was There A Popular Uprising Against August Coup?

*New York Times*, 9/8/81 -- Tom Wicker: "...That's not quite the way the story was told by several aides to Boris Yeltsin, the elected Pres. of the Russian republic; these aides traveled outside their country in the days following the failed coup and discussed what happened with numerous Westerners, including some Americans. In their view, expressed privately, only perhaps 1% of Moscow's population turned out for what appeared on U.S. television to be a massive demonstration against the reformist government of Gorbachev."

*Wall St. Journal*, 9/3/91 -- "....During the attempted takeover, the state-dominated General Confederation of Trade Unions failed to help him (Yeltsin) or Gorbachev, and it ignored Yeltsin's call for a general strike...."

# The Food Crisis in the USSR

*By Sam Marcy*

It's been only nine days since the counterrevolutionary camarilla in the USSR led by Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin first moved to illegally dissolve the Congress of People's Deputies. The Congress was the only all-national political body elected on the basis of universal suffrage.

The ruling group claimed the country faced a "catastrophe" and that its collapse was imminent unless speedy measures were taken. The government is now to be run by a new, self-appointed grouping that supposedly has emergency measures in place, ready to save the situation.

Moreover, the whole country is supposedly to be restructured along "democratic" lines. The people's deputies were presumably too clumsy, too slow, too argumentative, too cantankerous, and had to dissolve themselves.

Threats and intimidation were there for all to see and hear, but it was necessary to put a good face on all this. The quicker they dissolved, the sooner conditions in the country would improve.

Now, just a week later, this camarilla has already demonstrated its complete bankruptcy in regard to the crucial bread-and-butter issues it so loudly proclaimed it would solve.

## No Program For Food Crisis

There are articles in the bourgeois media every day about the food crisis expected in the USSR this winter. Prices are rising sharply while the harvesting and distribution of the crops are in disarray. Only where the state has returned to socialist emergency measures -- such as deploying soldiers and students to help bring in potato and carrot crops--is there hope of easing the crisis.

Privatization and individual private ownership of the means of production, the key staples of bourgeois counterrevolutionary propaganda, were widely hailed. Yet they seem farther off than ever.

Feeding the people despite harsh weather conditions has been the most crucial task facing the Soviet Union in all its years of existence. Even during World War II, the Soviet people and armed forces were supplied with food, while the Nazi armies came to grief in this respect.

Not long after the war, food was so plentiful that communist economists were preparing plans for the free distribution of bread within 15 years. This in a country where food production had been in a crisis since time immemorial!

Gorbachev mentioned on several occasions in the late 1980s that the price of bread in the USSR was so cheap that children used loaves as footballs. The implication was that bread was cheap and should be more costly.

## USSR Weathered Carter's Grain Embargo

One of the most difficult tests came when the Carter administration in January 1980 imposed a total embargo on the sale of grain to the USSR as punishment for its support of the Afghan revolutionary movement and government. The U.S. not only denied farmers here at home a market for their grain but bludgeoned its allies abroad, including Europe, Argentina, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, in an attempt to force them to join the embargo.

The embargo lasted more than a year. Yet in that time no one starved in the Soviet Union. Grain was harvested and successfully transported, and the population was well fed despite U.S. imperialist economic aggression. The USSR was able to buy grain and other food supplies from the very allies the Carter imperialist administration sought to bludgeon.

Of course, there was hardship for the Soviet population. But in the end it was the imperialists who had to give in. Soon after taking office, in April 1981, Reagan rescinded the embargo. The U.S. was unable to bring the Soviet leadership to heel because the Soviet government had cash in hand. It was the most credit-worthy nation in the world. It had huge funds at its disposal, gold as well as foreign currency.

Compare what happened a decade ago to the situation now, six years after this new wrecking crew led by Gorbachev began to attack socialist planning.

## Production Is Down

Newsweek magazine of Sept. 16 has a major article on the economic situation in the USSR:

"Food prices are going up; the price of potatoes at Moscow's state stores is expected to be 800 percent higher than last year.... As the economy crumbles, food and fuel production is declining across the board. This year's grain harvest is expected to be about 195 million metric tons, down from 240 million last year. Oil production is expected to drop 10 percent and coal production nearly 12 percent....

So far, economic reform has made some things worse."

It can now be clearly seen that the big campaign by the Gorbachev administration to cut subsidies to the principal ministries of the government, which they pejoratively called monopolies, was sheer demagoguery. It was necessary to cut them down, said the reformers, because they were bureaucratic and based upon administrative and command methods. So a good many ministries were replaced, including the one for agriculture.

However, instead of bringing about democratic, less centralized and presumably more efficient ministries, as they had promised, they have merely displaced the old ministries based on socialist planning with bloated bourgeois ministries.

So it was not a change from autocracy to democracy, but from a form of socialist planning, with all its presumed faults and bureaucratic administration, to a bourgeois ministry based on the free market. This group of free marketeers is now in charge of a centralized, socialist agricultural infrastructure. And what has been the result? A precipitous decline in production, according to Newsweek and many other sources. Nevertheless, while these reformers are continuing to dismantle the old system, they are limited by the dire needs of the people.

### **'Only Communists Can Get the Harvest In'**

Roy Medvedev, until last week a member of the Congress of People's Deputies and one who has been hailed in the West as a historian of the Stalin era, says, "The [Communist] party's running the Stavropol region [a rich agricultural area]--they have to. No one else can get the harvest in, and that's the most important job facing the country right now." (Boston Globe, Sept. 8.)

At the 19th Party Conference in June 1988, Gorbachev admitted publicly that an acute food crisis loomed. But he cheerfully announced it would soon be solved. His new entourage of bourgeois reformist economists and reactionary bourgeois politicians had all counted on solving the perennial agricultural problem by quickly privatizing the collective farms or completely dismantling them.

Even before the 19th Party Conference, Gorbachev had begun to sing paeans of praise to individual farming. He showered compliments on the model family farms of the West. And he urged rapid reorganization of the collective farms in a bourgeois direction.

Once a decree was issued that promoted private farms, all the bourgeois economists, both East and West, expected there would be an avalanche of

farmers abandoning the collectives. But that never really happened.

Much to the surprise of the new practitioners of bourgeois economics, the collective farmers showed resistance to the assault upon collective property forms. This was interpreted by the bourgeoisie here as resistance by the local bureaucracy. But why would they resist--except that they are closer to the masses? The local bureaucracy are only a transmission belt reflecting what the collective farmers want.

The bourgeoisie forgot that the farmers were wondering what would happen to their pensions, their social security, their children's free schools, kindergartens and the like if they embarked on private ventures.

It turned out that only the rich, only those who had accumulated funds secretly, were able to take a chance. And that was on the basis of some government guarantees. So with all Gorbachev's innovations and reorganizing aimed at pushing decollectivization, only a small portion succeeded.

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***".... the collective farmers showed resistance to the assault upon collective property forms."***

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Gorbachev himself was becoming slowly disenchanted with the progress toward reorganization on a bourgeois basis. But he blamed it all on bureaucratism.

He finally agreed to appoint Yegor Ligachev, a so-called hardliner, to be in charge of agriculture. That way Ligachev would bear the brunt of the failures. However--without going into the details of the various plans and reorganizations--the social and political structure of the collective farms is still strong and predominant as against the cruel incursions of private interest and the encouragement of the bourgeois reformists.

### **Can Sabotage Socialism, But Can't Reestablish Capitalism**

After more than six years of experimenting, the USSR now faces a disastrous situation. The very problem Gorbachev described as acute in 1986, 1987 and 1988--food production and distribution--is now even worse, despite all the promises of help that would flow as fast as water once privatization took place.

What is this new wrecking crew's program as far as agriculture is concerned? It is and has been to



privatize the agricultural sector and the food supply. But no matter what inroads they've made, no matter how much chaos and destruction they've brought about, the centralized socialist sector of the economy remains basically intact.

Of course, let's not underestimate the marauding, crooked, illegal bourgeois shadow market and all the phony manipulations with respect to food delivery. These go on. Nevertheless, the socialist sector is the only one capable of functioning for the masses. Only it can deliver food on the basis of state--controlled prices.

This is true even taking into account the increasingly manipulative character of the new top bureaucracy that administers agriculture, as well as the inflationary policies of the banking officials. The food sector, beginning with the collective farms, is still centrally organized according to bourgeois economist Grigory A. Yavlinsky, who is now a member of the interim economic steering committee appointed by the State Council that has usurped the powers of the Congress of People's Deputies. (New York Times, Sept. 9.)

There is no way the new ruling camarilla can function in agriculture and food distribution except in what remains of the centralized socialist sector. They have to shelve the privatization they are so anxious to adopt. They can enact laws but they cannot make them operate.

This is the central dilemma of the new counterrevolutionary junta. They can't break up an ocean liner into small rowboats, especially if there are no buyers.

### State Council Hasn't Met

Privatization on a mass scale will only bring more chaos, as it has during all the Gorbachev years. This new governing group said the fundamental reason for dissolving the Congress of People's Deputies was the looming economic and social catastrophe. The Congress of People's Deputies presumably was too large and too balky to act quickly.

But after a week of the new junta's domination, the State Council, which was created to "re-design" (wreck) a new union government, has "given no indication of economic plans" to do anything. (New York Times, Sept. 9.) They have not met nor have they issued any "communiques on any meeting or plans for the progress toward recovery promised by Mr. Gorbachev."

Presumably this body of conspirators would quickly present a plan for a new union government. But it would have to be of a looser type. Indeed, the bourgeois economist Yavlinsky says there is "no place for reform on an all-union level." All they

have been able to produce is a continuing process of disintegration.

In all the years of the Soviet Union since the end of the civil war and imperialist intervention, production increased. Now, during the last two years of the Gorbachev administration, the actual gross national product has declined. Inflation is rising. There is no plan of any kind--not even bourgeois, let alone socialist--for resuming production.

The new camarilla that has taken over is basically a group of technocrats, endlessly concerned with their own problems in each republic. But to be successful, each republic is in one way or another economically dependent on all-round union economic operations.

However, the country is moving in exactly the opposite direction. Nothing this junta does can reverse the process. They simply don't have an overall plan, as Yavlinsky himself admitted. And only an overall plan can possibly avert the looming economic catastrophe.

Hence the frantic calls for the imperialists to shell out more money from their swollen treasuries. But this is slow in coming.

The prospect of the camarilla acting in a united manner, with an overall resolve to overcome the impending economic catastrophe, is nil. It is only a transitional form incapable of establishing a full--fledged capitalist system. What is more likely to emerge is an increasingly authoritarian grouping leading to a fascist dictatorship.

This new group has been pounding into the heads of the masses that it will decentralize. It is copying from some bourgeois economists in the U.S. who think that smaller is better, when the whole reality of the Soviet Union has been to build large-scale, mass-production industrial, scientific and technological units. This should not, of course, exclude smaller projects, especially pilot programs and the like. What the Soviet Union needed, however, was not economic decentralization but greater democratization of socialist planning. Instead, this new crew opted for a bourgeois economy. Therein lies the problem.

There is certainly no way to restore a thriving Soviet Union or even a thriving Russia or Ukraine or Kazakhstan as long as the reforms stimulate national antagonisms and make them unable to agree among themselves on how to govern.

The workers are sure to commence their resistance movement as each new day reveals more sharply the ineptitude, gross incompetence, and venomous internecine rivalries and animosities promoted and stimulated by the bourgeois, pro-capitalist reforms.

**September 19, 1991**

# The USSR and the Oppressed Nations

By Sam Marcy

Every worker who has ever opened the "Communist Manifesto" knows its central slogan is "Workers of the world unite--you have nothing to lose but your chains."

Lesser known, however, is the so-called "amendment" Lenin added in one of the early Communist Party congresses of the USSR. He expanded the slogan to "Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite." It was not a chance thought.

Beginning with the split with the Mensheviks in 1903, and during all the years of clandestine organization at home and exile abroad, Lenin fought against all sorts of deviations from support for national self-determination. The party fought the cultural nationalists, the assimilationists, and those who were openly against self-determination.

In no small way the victories in the Bolshevik Revolution itself, the Civil War, the struggle against the 14 invading imperialist powers, and finally the defeat of the Nazis were due to a correct, implacable struggle to retain the right of self-determination while struggling might and main for a class struggle policy to unify the workers of all nationalities in the struggle against counterrevolutionary bourgeois reaction at home and imperialism abroad.

It will do no good to engage in idle speculation on what new form of struggle will emerge against the present bourgeois restorationist governing group without first taking into account the basis for its current though ephemeral victory.

## A Neocolonialist Government

The present grouping is a camarilla, an arbitrary grouping that grabbed the reins of power after the ill-fated Aug. 19 coup in a time of deepening social crisis and political confusion. The present governing group is not only bourgeois in social composition, it is neocolonialist in its world perspective.

It is acting as a surrogate for Anglo-U.S. imperialism and is, at least for now, bound hand and foot to its foreign policy. How long it can last is another question. But its neocolonialist character is absolutely beyond question.

One need only refer to the latest dictates of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, as reported in the New York Times of September 16.

What could be more crass, more humiliating, more decisive for the destiny of the country than that the U.S. government is now demanding an accounting of the USSR's gold reserves? Since time immemorial, this information has been considered the most sensitive issue between governments.

Furthermore, Baker went so far as to personally meet with the head of the KGB and attempt to enlist his support in ferreting out the extent of the gold reserves of the USSR. Presumably such information is now spread over several ministries. As the Times explains it, "Baker asked for a small favor. Would the KGB, Mr. Baker asked, please help the leaders of the new Soviet economic council locate and total up all Soviet gold reserves so they could prepare an economic reform plan that the West could seriously respond to?"

This means the U.S. is probably demanding an accounting of the weekly gold production of the USSR, the precise locations of the mines, which are the most productive, which are yet untapped, which are on the point of exhaustion, and so on.

This can only happen because a counterrevolution has taken place in the USSR, headed by a camarilla of leaders who are bent on complete collaboration with and subordination to the interests of U.S. imperialism.

It can't be described in any other way.

## Turnaround on Centralism

The very same article reported that "Baker has also said no economic help is going to be feasible if the republics do not work out a coherent economic arrangement with a central decision-making body that can enforce business contracts and laws."

How often over the past 6 years have the imperialists poured effusive praise on Gorbachev's economic reforms, especially the heavy emphasis he laid on decentralizing not only the governmental apparatus but the economy?

In fact, the formula adopted by the petty bourgeoisie in the U.S.--"smaller is better"--has been a reactionary utopia viewed with scorn by the monopolists. Nevertheless, it is propagated as a cardinal point of faith in the free enterprise system, mainly to confuse and disorient the masses.

This idea was dished out to the USSR over a period of years and finally became a believable concept, something to look forward to, something the Americans brought as a contribution to the Soviet economy. As soon as it was applied, however, it led to an avalanche of centrifugal forces that began to pull the union of republics in every different direction.

And what do we find now? That the Bush-Baker-Cheney-Powell group representing U.S. monopoly finance capital and the military-industrial complex have suddenly done a complete turnaround.

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***"What lay behind the issue of centralization was not democracy, but which class was to organize and centralize the means of production in the USSR....."***

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They are now for centralism, lock, stock and barrel. Why this volte-face? Precisely because they now feel they have the threads of the Soviet economy in their hands, that is, in the hands of the reactionary camarilla that runs the USSR, or is at least regarded by the imperialists as the actual governing body of the country.

Now that the monopolist bourgeoisie of the U.S., through their minions in the reactionary camarilla, feel they have the economy in their hands, they wish to impose upon it reactionary centralized control. So the issue has really not been centralization of industry per se. The issue all along was centralization on the basis of socialist construction versus centralization on the basis of capitalist dismantling of socialist industry.

What lay behind the issue of centralization was not democracy, but which class was to organize and centralize the means of production in the USSR, which class would have the power to rescue the USSR from the chaos, confusion and deliberate sabotage inflicted upon the economy as a result of the capitalist reforms enacted by the Gorbachev administration.

Capitalist centralization means the accumulation of vast funds in the hands of private individuals for private profit. Socialist centralization, on the other hand, presupposes the accumulation in the hands of the state of whatever surplus exists after wages,

wear and tear, depreciation, raw materials and so on are accounted for. It can then be used to provide necessary services and expand socialist production in accordance with an up-to-date plan, as Marx explained in his "Critique of the Gotha Program."

These two types of centralization differ as heaven from earth. The centralization of the bourgeoisie is calculated to enrich the individual investor, entrepreneur or company executive. By its very nature it is divisive, contradictory, antagonistic.

Coming up now in the Soviet Union, with the blessings of imperialism, its overall thrust is to shove the burden of the restructuring on the backs of the workers. It is in fact nothing but the same austerity program that the U.S. monopolists have been pursuing for more than a dozen years, with devastating effects on the working class.

How long will it take for broad Soviet public opinion to get the measure of the situation and disabuse themselves of the bourgeois reformist clap-trap and demagoguery? That is one of the crucial issues we hope to deal with.

### **U.S. Wants Control of Ruble**

Considering the desperate condition in which the reactionary governing grouping now finds itself, the U.S. leaders are bound to ask for control of the banking system and, more particularly, of the technology to print Soviet money. This is even more delicate than getting control of the secret gold reserves.

It is well known that the U.S. imperialists have demanded of newly emerging, small, independent countries that they install technology of the most advanced type to produce their currency. The less industrialized countries cannot manufacture these machines themselves. They simply do not have the technological wherewithal to build the machines to produce the special papers and engraving equipment needed to print their own currency. Therefore, the task is arrogated to the U.S. Treasury itself. In that way, they are able to keep tabs on the amount of currency that gets printed and have a general idea of the rate of inflation.

Is it possible that the mighty USSR is now in such dire circumstances that the new governing group of reactionary neocolonialists will agree to that?

Again and again, the U.S. team of economic and financial advisers have referred to the need for

getting a handle on the rate of inflation in the USSR. They have made it a prior condition before the ruble can be converted into dollars. Thus, they are dictating the terms of the relationship to the new governing camarilla.

The very fact that Secretary of State Baker, whose counterpart in the USSR is Foreign Minister Boris D. Pankin, has been meeting not with Pankin but with the KGB, demonstrates that Baker regards the KGB as having more authority.

The program of the Pentagon, as described in the Sept. 16 New York Times, is to search for ways "to aid the Soviet military" by "considering giving technical and organizational help to Moscow's armed forces and those of the newly independent Baltic countries."

Take all these things together and you have nothing less than a blueprint for the domination of the basic elements of state craft in the USSR--the economic levers and the military establishment.

How could even a neocolonialist, reactionary grouping such as this camarilla lend itself to such sordid purposes? The answer lies in the very desperate condition that the country finds itself in and the even more desperate promises that all of them have made to the population, to the workers in particular.

## Washington Changes Mind on Aid

The situation has become so urgent for the survival of this camarilla that the Bush administration says it is abandoning its old demand that economic reforms precede the granting of immediate economic assistance. Instead, it will begin speedy distribution of aid--urgently needed foodstuffs and other materials--in order to cushion the expected economic collapse, particularly in the coming winter.

The advanced guard elements, the real communists, those who have believed they were working toward a socialist society, are now seeing before their very eyes the swift destruction of the benefits achieved thus far. For them, a political reorientation and reevaluation of the current situation is mandatory.

It can best be begun by reviewing some pertinent events which illuminate part of the problem the broad working class public has experienced in this recent period. We ought to begin with an event that had world significance but was covered in a low-key and tendentious way in the Soviet press and

even more so in the imperialist West, particularly the United States.

## Gorbachev's Nemesis

Long after Gorbachev is gone, when historians try to reconstruct the story of his downfall, and when the debates about the coup and the workers' apparent indifference to Yeltsin's call for a general strike have ended, one important event will finally stand out as pivotal in Gorbachev's decline.

It will not be the election of Boris Yeltsin as Russian president. Nor even the hardships that arrived in the train of Gorbachev's capitalist reforms.

The turning point in his fortunes, which will ultimately prove to be his undoing, was the insurrection in Alma-Ata in December 1986, some 20 months after Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It was a huge, spontaneous rebellion that involved some 200,000 people, as the Soviet press belatedly reported.

The insurrection in Alma-Ata upset all the calculations of the Gorbachev regime and removed a pillar he was relying on to accomplish his capitalist reformation.

One would have expected blazing headlines in the West. But no such thing. While articles appeared in the major capitalist newspapers and magazines, they lasted only a day or two and then the event seemed cast into oblivion. Its significance was woefully underplayed. Most of the working class press also either paid no attention or gave a bourgeois interpretation of this revolutionary development.

It was an event that could be well understood in the U.S., but only if cast in the light of the great rebellions that took place in Watts, Harlem, Newark and Detroit.

The revolutionary struggle in Kazakhstan should not be confused with the pro-imperialist independence movements of the Baltic area. These were given early encouragement by the Gorbachev reformers, who intended to make these republics a showcase to the West of the capitalist reforms. What a howling miscalculation that was.

Even now, however, when national antagonisms are said to be tearing the USSR apart, there seems to be no memory in either the Western or Soviet

press of the events in Alma-Ata on Dec. 17-18, 1986. Before examining what touched off such a great social explosion, let's review a few facts.

### **Kazakhstan's Remarkable Development**

Alma-Ata is the capital of the republic of Kazakhstan. This one republic alone has a land mass equal to that of Western Europe. It is in the arid south central region of the USSR, and borders on Siberia to the north, China to the east, and the Kirghiz, Uzbek and Turkmen republics to the south.

Kazakhstan is the third most populous republic in the USSR, with about 15 million people. As a result of immigration from other republics, particularly from Russia and the Ukraine, the Kazakh people are said to have been reduced proportionally to about a third of the population, but in recent years have been on the increase.

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*"A historic turning point in Gorbachev's reforms came when he crushed the December 1986 insurrection in Alma-Ata."*

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This republic is rich in mineral resources--notably coal, oil, copper, lead, zinc, nickel, chromium and silver. It has developed a large iron and steel industry and manufactures many industrial products. It has considerable hydroelectric power. The Soviet Union's space program has a major center there.

During the Khrushchev period vast tracts of previously wild grasslands in Kazakhstan were opened up to cultivation in the "virgin lands" campaign, which helped stimulate the wave of immigration. It created a great deal of enthusiasm and helped transform Kazakhstan into a great new grain-growing center for the Soviet Union.

The Kazakh republic has loomed large in the inner politics of the Communist Party (CPSU), especially in the struggles over leadership.

When, after the death of Konstantin Chernenko, Gorbachev ran for general secretary of the party in March 1985, the Politburo member who nominated him was Andrei Gromyko, regarded then as a conservative Communist. Whatever speculation there may be over the factional lineup in the Politburo, one thing is certain: Gromyko nominated him, and then others followed suit.

Grigory Romanov, a Politburo member, aspired to the post, and so did Viktor Grishin. One Politburo member who did not support Gorbachev's nomination was Dinmukhamed Kunayev, head of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan for 25 years. Whatever the rivalries and aspirations of the Politburo members after the death of Chernenko, Kunayev was not in the running. But he was a stalwart supporter of the old guard and regarded by some as a protege of Leonid Brezhnev.

### **Gorbachev Purges Old Guard**

Gorbachev, it is now obvious, had his own ideas. However they evolved, whether or not they became apparent to him soon after he entered the Central Committee or developed later, he soon opened a drive to get rid of the old guard.

Gorbachev began relieving one after another, with a view towards revamping the Politburo. It was fairly easy to displace some of them with what appeared at the time as Gorbachev supporters. But the displacement of Kunayev turned out to be an insuperable problem.

Kunayev was strongly entrenched, very popular, and had many achievements behind him. In fact, it was often said of his republic that it gave far more to the Union than it received, unlike some of the less developed republics.

The main thing Gorbachev had to consider was that there were only two leaders of the Kazakhstan party on a national level, and Kunayev was the more enduring and popular. But he was a hardliner, so-called. He had had only one dispute with the center and that involved irrigation--an extensive project to divert Siberian waters to the southern republics. After many years of scientific debate, the digging of a canal was finally begun. However, as the political dispute between Kunayev and Moscow heated up, the project was abruptly halted with no discussion. Whether or not there was scientific merit to it, it appeared that the issue was decided on other grounds.

By 1986, Gorbachev was already the most popular man in Western Europe and the U.S. Flattery of him was flowing like water. To firm up his majority in the Politburo, it was necessary to get rid of Kunayev.

### **Dumping Party Procedure**

Since Gorbachev had made his reputation on glasnost and democracy, the legal and correct way to do it, if he could not get a clear majority in the Polit-



buro or Central Committee, would have been to call a congress of the party. At that time the party was the leader and guide for government decisions.

The party congress was a natural place for Gorbachev to raise his political and organizational problems. If he had a new program or a new method of procedure, if he were embarking on glasnost and democracy, the initial place to start was the congress of the party, the principal organ that was still supposed to guide the government.

If he had a restructuring plan of his own, that was the place to bring it. If he had sharp and serious criticism calling for an overhaul of the governmental apparatus, there was no more suitable organization to discuss it than the guiding organ of the government, the CPSU.

Above all, the party congress was the place to renew the Central Committee. Then the Central Committee would elect a new Politburo.

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***"At one swoop, Gorbachev had set in motion the centrifugal forces which would dissolve the socialist union and ultimately undo him."***

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Before the death of Lenin, party congresses took place just about every year. But during Stalin's time, as is well known, there were very few congresses. If we are to take Khrushchev's word, there was only one congress in 14 years. After Stalin's death, party congresses were held more regularly.

So from every point of view, if Gorbachev was intent on removing Kunayev as an obstacle to his program, there was a way to proceed in accordance with glasnost as well as general democratic centralist procedures according to communist doctrine.

### **Kunayev Ousted as Head of Kazakhstan Party**

Instead, he put pressure on the Central Committee of the Kazakhstan Communist Party to remove Kunayev as general secretary. The deed was done at a Dec. 16, 1986, plenum in Alma-Ata. This was charitably reported in Western capitalist papers like the Washington Post as reflecting the "advice" of Moscow. How different from the pre-Gorbachev days when they surely would have labeled such an

undemocratic diktat as being on "orders from Moscow."

According to a recent book *Gorbachev* by Dusko Doder and Louise Branson, Penguin Books, New York, 1990), Gorbachev had spent months maneuvering to dislodge Kunayev and other hard-liners from the Politburo. He finally succeeded one month later, in January 1987.

Meanwhile, however, Gorbachev and his collaborators in Kazakhstan had to think long and hard on their choice to replace Kunayev as head of the party there. Obviously, another Kazakh would be best in a Kazakh republic. But they failed to come up with one.

The next possible choice was a Russian, the largest ethnic group in Kazakhstan. But that might open up an internecine struggle between the two nationalities.

Finding a compromise among the Ukrainians or Byelorussians must have been thought of but rejected. Finally they got Gennadi Kolbin, a Chuvash who looked Russian but was from the Autonomous Republic of Chuvash! How could such a choice be accepted? But the fateful decision was made.

### **Mass Rebellion Follows**

No sooner had the choice of Kolbin been announced than the insurrection started in full force. A huge crowd stormed the party headquarters, then the police station. How many were killed is not fully known, but later dispatches made it clear that hundreds were arrested and harsh prison sentences were handed out.

At one swoop, Gorbachev had set in motion the centrifugal forces which would dissolve the socialist union and ultimately undo him. These forces were incompatible with any type of socialist centralization. Even capitalist centralization, as was soon to be evident, became difficult if not impossible.

The announcement of Kunayev's removal could not but reverberate immediately in the neighboring republics. It could not but be heard in China, Pakistan, India and Iran.

It was the kind of blow whose meaning would be well understood in those parts of the world, even if the eyes of the Western proletariat were closed by the capitalist press. It was an unmistakable sign that a rupture had developed between the center and the

Asian republics. It could not but delight the imperialist bourgeoisie.

The struggle in Alma-Ata was the first reported rebellion in the Soviet Union since the days of Kronstadt in 1919 and it broke the solid front of unity among the nationalities.

To those who scoff at this unity and drag up the repressions during the Stalin period, we are not unmindful of that aspect. Notwithstanding its relevancy, however, it obscures and does not illuminate the nature of the current struggle.

The Soviet Union for nearly 70 years was able to hold together more than 100 nationalities. True, it might have been by force, but it lasted during war and peace, during civil war and famine. There had been no known rebellions of nationalities in the USSR until the insurrection in Alma-Ata.

### Effect on Armed Forces

Above all, it had major repercussions in the armed forces, the defensive armor of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. During the revolutionary period in the USSR, the army under Lenin and Trotsky had abolished rank and privilege. These were restored later, however, and then were enormously inflated under Gorbachev as part of the material incentives introduced with the bourgeois reforms. Glasnost became a vehicle for the dissemination of bourgeois pacifism. The setbacks in the Afghanistan revolutionary struggle were used to disaffect the rank and file. Never before in Soviet military history was there even a semblance of this bourgeois phenomenon.

The Alma-Ata insurrection sent shock waves throughout the many nationalities in the USSR and at once awoke the nationality problem as a principal element in the struggle against Gorbachev's bourgeois reforms.

Kolbin's nomination was regarded as a hostile act. Much worse for Gorbachev, the indictments for "hooliganism," criminal destruction of property, and the killing of police, militia and civilians all tended to antagonize the population, as did the accusations of corruption against Kunayev and his removal from the Politburo a month later.

The rebellion spread to all the cities of Kazakhstan. One important indication of Kunayev's prestige was that he himself was neither imprisoned nor indicted, and to this day is said to be alive and well and a strong supporter of the conservative grouping.

### Reaction in West

The imperialist press in the U.S. played the rebellion in very low key. Imagine their outraged tone had this happened during the Stalin era: "The Stalinist monolith has been cracked. The nationalities are now awakening. Rebellion in the Russian empire is rising to the surface." But nothing like that kind of reporting took place. The capitalist press was involved in frying other fish. It was most concerned with what appeared to be the immediate release of Andrei Sakharov, the symbol of counter-revolutionary bourgeois ideology and himself a leader of many in the bourgeois intelligentsia.

Sakharov, Yeltsin and the others who feel such great kinship to the Western intelligentsia and to capitalist values in general also denigrate and look down on the southern republics as a burden. Moreover, they look upon Asia in general with fear and apprehension.

And so the Western imperialist press found it convenient to repeat the Tass account that the rebellion was confined to Alma-Ata and involved at most a few thousand "hooligans." Many were said to be intoxicated. A Dec. 23, 1986, Washington Post article was entitled "Soviet Rioters Got Vodka, Drugs, Witnesses Report."

How does this differ from the way the French bourgeoisie described the proletarian insurrection of 1871 when the workers of Paris set up the Commune?

But eventually a very different account came out. According to the book by Doder and Branson, at the height of the rebellion in Alma-Ata there were 200,000 people "milling around" in the streets. Seven police were killed and an unknown number of civilians killed and injured. In the aftermath of the rebellion, Gorbachev dispatched a team of Politburo members from Moscow to take control. An enormous purge of Kazakh officials followed, including the outright dismissal of 1,200 police.

On Feb. 19, 1987, the Washington Post admitted that the rebellion had involved many thousands, many of them students, and that "placards used during the demonstrations called for 'Kazakhstan for Kazakhs' and quoted sayings by Lenin on the nationalities question."

While the students were in the vanguard, as happens in most social explosions, the vast numbers in the streets had to be workers, who were outraged at

the chauvinist turn being taken in Moscow by the Gorbachev grouping.

Meanwhile, Gorbachev was telling the world that a new day was dawning with vast reforms and freedom of speech, of the press, new freedoms for the church and so on.

All this tended to obscure what was happening in the south and what it meant for the whole Union.

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The imperialist bourgeoisie was making great strides with Gorbachev, and in the heartland of Russia itself there appeared new and strong voices of dissent, voices of the bourgeoisie getting more certain of itself and becoming more encouraged day by day by Gorbachev's international demeanor and the reception abroad.

Overlooked completely was the seething cauldron in Alma-Ata. The demonstrators had cried "We want Kunayev back." While the majority were overwhelmingly Kazakhs, there were also other nationalities, including Russians, who were opposed to the unseating of Kunayev.

Today when we view the dismemberment of the Soviet Union and the struggle among the nationalities, Azerbaijan against Armenia, the struggle within Georgia, the new awareness in Uzbekistan, Kirghizia, the independence of Moldavia, and so on, we must remember that the origin goes back to the insurrection that took place in Alma-Ata.

It arose after Gorbachev took steps that were undemocratic and anti-glasnost to the core in an effort to put across his pro-capitalist reforms.

### **Party Conference Looked the Other Way**

In June 1988, the bourgeoisie hailed the 19th Party Conference. It was carried live on CNN and covered extensively in all the media. It was presumably a complete exposition of what democracy and glasnost meant. In total, it was an attack against the

prior administrations, from Stalin all the way to Chernenko. Most of all, attacks were leveled against the "bloated" ministries, the so-called "monopolies," and it was said they had to be dismantled in order to accelerate perestroika.

Pitifully few were the voices warning that what was in store was not a change from "administrative and command" procedures to democratic procedures, not the elimination of monopolies, but the establishment of bourgeois ministries, which would be not less but more bloated.

The 19th Party Conference was a great display of glasnost in action. It pleased the imperialist bourgeoisie no end. Yet the most crucial question, the question which was to decide whether the Soviet Union would remain a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, already lay in the balance. Kazakhstan was not discussed and the Azerbaijan-Armenian struggle, which was due to be considered at this conference, was literally cast aside. Kazakhstan received the poorest billing. The new general secretary mouthed the phrases of Gorbachev and his supporters.

The Gorbachev forces raised a hoopla for perestroika and the many good things that were to come. The Soviet public was treated to a denunciation of the communist past. All its achievements were denigrated. The fate of the country was left in the hands of the new reformers to reshape the social character of the Soviet Union.

### **Where Can National Disputes Get Resolved?**

The national question and the restructuring were dealt with in a thoroughly illegal and unconstitutional manner. A conference can take up many questions, but matters that are programmatic in character can only be taken up by a delegated body, a party congress. Gorbachev knew this, but he also knew that at a party congress he could not prevail.

But a party conference is not chosen in the same way. It is much looser. There was plenty of room to pack it with his supporters.

As we have written in earlier articles, the Soviet Union is a bicameral state. The provisions of the Soviet Constitution on this are clear and simple and remained virtually unchanged until the recent counterrevolutionary events.

This bicameral form of government is unique in world history. It has two chambers, the first elected

by proportional representation and universal suffrage, the second by nationality. What is significant about this setup is not the makeup of the first body but of the second. It is composed of all the nationalities, large and small. All legislation has to pass both houses.

The second chamber is where questions of nationality are initiated, discussed and if necessary arbitrated and mediated. It is a parliamentary forum which is most suitable not only for understanding but for lending a sympathetic ear. If there is no agreement, a new election must be held of both houses.

When this machinery was set up in the early 1920s, during Lenin's time, it was agreed to by all the factions. Through all the various changes of the constitution, the bicameral system remained in force.

Having met a disaster in Alma-Ata, it was appropriate for the leadership to bring the matter to the Soviet of Nationalities.

At the time of the Party Conference, the dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia seemed just as urgent. But like the Kazakhstan rebellion, it was side-lined.

Gorbachev did finally call together commissions to study the problem. But these were deliberate exercises in futility. They had no arbitration authority. They met for the purpose of airing the disputes, and seemed to only contribute to the animosity. Gorbachev reveled in scolding the nationalities for not arriving at an agreement, after which the meetings were adjourned without any tangible results.

He continued the unconstitutional procedure of failing to call together the Soviet of Nationalities which, along with the Soviet of People's Deputies, had the power to enforce a decision, not only in Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Armenia but in Georgia as well. Despite veiled threats of force, disappointment of the republics with the central government was growing. All of it showed that Gorbachev and his grouping were going ahead with restructuring in the direction of capitalist reforms without calculating the dangerous centrifugal forces they set in motion.

### **Sham Democracy**

Kunayev's opposition to the reforms lay at the base of Gorbachev's effort to illegally and unconstitutionally remove him. True, this had been the practice of his predecessors in the Politburo, but it was

nonetheless illegal and unconstitutional, even if he used the Central Committee as a rubber stamp to approve the matter.

Thus, Gorbachev began his reformist leadership not by reviving socialist democracy but by pandering to and developing bourgeois democracy and stifling genuine democratic procedures.

Even if Gorbachev thought a congress of the party would be reluctant to adopt specific, clear-cut proposals, he still had the option of appealing to the mass of 20 million Communists, not to speak of the broad public.

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***"Thus, Gorbachev began his reformist leadership not by reviving socialist democracy but by pandering to and developing bourgeois democracy and stifling genuine democratic procedures."***

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But he shunned all this and went through a process of sham democracy at the party conference which deprived the rank and file party people of electing delegates to a party congress with legal power to legislate for the party. By the time a party congress took place, it had been put in the position of advancing its own demise as legal guide to the government.

Had all of this taken place in the midst of dramatic economic growth spurred by restructuring, there's no question Gorbachev would have been hailed as a hero of the people, notwithstanding his violation of democratic procedures.

However, no sooner had the conference ended than one government report followed another indicating further and further decline, until a looming catastrophe stared them all in the face.

### **Turn to the West**

Turning back to socialist production seemed altogether unrealistic, in view of the commitment of all the leaders to move on with the economic reform and away from socialist construction. There seemed only one avenue open to redress the situation. Obviously, it was the avenue that Gorbachev, Shevardnadze, and the rest of the leadership had long thought about as the means to make the bourgeois

reforms work and to establish the USSR as a state within the imperialist world framework.

They would rely upon the imperialists, particularly the U.S., to help them restructure and break up the socialist system. This would mean the integration of the USSR into the Western imperialist alliance.

At first this integration was resisted by Western imperialism. They insisted that the conversion of the economy had to come before any assistance. But the breaking up of socialism means chaos, disorder, unemployment, misery and poverty. This is the catalyst for revolt and the revival of revolutionary struggle. They all understand that.

Even Henry Kissinger, one of the prime architects of counterrevolution in the USSR, now says that privatization is not the "cure-all." He estimates that to establish a stable capitalist system would require at least "\$1.5 trillion a year for five years--far beyond any foreseeable private or governmental resources." (New York Post, Sept. 17.)

He ought to know. He is one of the principals in the Council on Foreign Relations, which sports many former and present government heads.

### **Iraq and Cuba**

As the crisis deepened, the imperialist G-7, the dominant imperialist powers, reconsidered and took it for good coin that the capitalist restructuring of the USSR was to begin moving in earnest. They demanded political proofs, however, and they got them.

The first came automatically, without the intervention of the West. That was the exercise of Great Russian chauvinism against the other nationalities.

The second and far more visible was the alignment of the USSR with the imperialist powers in their aggression against Iraq, about which we wrote extensively.

The third, which we have now all witnessed, is the complete abandonment of revolutionary aid and assistance to the beleaguered Cuban socialist republic.

The struggle between the oppressed nations and the oppressors is one of the characteristic features of the world imperialist system. The struggle for national equality is one of the cornerstones of Leninism.

All this leads to one fundamental conclusion: The capitalist reforms in the USSR have turned into a struggle of the oppressing nation against the oppressed. They've finally joined the camp of the imperialists in this regard. We cannot regard it as a solitary development.

Foreign policy is and always has been an extension of domestic policy. The geopoliticians of the bourgeoisie who regard everything from the point of view of superpower rivalry are incapable of understanding the relationship of the national question to the class question precisely because they are the clientele of the imperialist bourgeoisie. They see Iraq as well as Cuba as part and parcel of superpower rivalry, as though the class structures were irrelevant.

The aggression against Iraq could never have happened with the USSR's support had the Gorbachev grouping not embarked upon the bourgeois reforms, with their attendant violation of Leninist norms on the national question. One followed the other as day follows night.

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***"The struggle between the oppressed nations and the oppressors is one of the characteristic features of the world imperialist system. The struggle for national equality is one of the cornerstones of Leninism."***

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Of course, this may not have been clear quickly enough, especially in view of the vacillations in Soviet diplomacy. The invitation to Soviet Chief of Staff General Moiseyev to meet with Gen. Colin Powell a year ago in the U.S. to coordinate military policy was a milestone in the U.S. effort to engage the Soviet military in its aggressive plans. It took two summit meetings to pull the USSR into them.

Despite all vacillations and qualifications, the USSR did join the aggression, although it didn't send a military grouping into combat.

### **Not Power Blocs But Class Camps**

Soviet support for Cuba had been considered as apart from all other USSR diplomatic ventures. The Cuban missile crisis was a throwback to the heroic age of the Bolshevik Revolution. It is true that Khrushchev teetered back and forth while humanity held its breath, but nevertheless the showdown with



U.S. imperialism revived the revolutionary image of the USSR as the ally and protector, with qualifications, of the anti-imperialist worldwide struggle.

The bourgeois view, endlessly repeated, is that the interests of the Soviet Union in Cuba were part of an arbitrary struggle for geopolitical advantage between two superpowers. Much of the progressive movement failed to see that it was really part of an international class struggle with the oppressing imperialist countries on one side and the oppressed peoples, the working class and the socialist countries on the other; a struggle between two social systems based on antagonist classes.

It was an error for some Marxists to have employed the term "superpower struggle"; it tended to conceal the sordid profit motive of the imperialists and hide the necessary class struggle of the workers and oppressed.

The complete capitulation of the USSR on the question of Cuba is therefore a class betrayal rather than merely an abandonment of geopolitical struggles for so-called national advantage. Therein lies its real significance.

Thus in trying to understand the renunciation of the anti-imperialist struggle by the USSR, one must relate what has happened in relation to Cuba to its joining the aggression against Iraq, and even earlier to the defeat of the insurrection in Alma-Ata.

The revival of the revolutionary class struggle against imperialism in general, as well as against the current camarilla in the USSR, requires first and foremost a reevaluation of the social and class forces in the USSR.

It requires an understanding that, except for the early years of the revolution, the proletariat has been in power in the Soviet Union only in a sociological and economic sense; and only in a very limited way in a political sense.

The enormous growth of privilege and the nascent development of an actual bourgeois current in the USSR aided and abetted the development of actual counterrevolutionary forces. The growth of privilege within the party dammed up revolutionary consciousness; it inhibited the party from fully exercising its revolutionary potential for developing the new society.

It is wrong, however, to sum it all up in terms of bureaucracy alone. That presents an altogether false

perspective. The extreme, unyielding, ever-present pressure of world imperialism never faded away for even a single day. One can only marvel at the great accomplishments in industry, science and culture made in spite of war, counterrevolutionary incursions, subversion, economic isolation and blockade.

The Soviet Union was the first in space. It established the second greatest industrial and technological apparatus in the world. It was the only underdeveloped country that rose out of imperialist economic and financial bondage. Only a socialist revolution was able to accomplish that.

Nor is this drama finished. What will revive the struggle for socialism? The enormous infliction of unemployment, hunger and poverty on the masses, and the general disillusionment of the lower echelons of the bourgeois intelligentsia itself, will bring the realization that the incredibly euphemistic term "privatization" is merely a cover for capitalist slavery.

The lower echelons of the communists will learn more quickly the closer they come to the poverty line. Above all, the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, which can never be expunged from the USSR, are the greatest source for a rapid resurgence of the movement.



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